

**REPORT OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY
HAROLD CAMPING'S VIEW OF THE CHURCH**

INTRODUCTION

Your committee was assigned to study and assess the teaching of Mr. Harold Camping regarding the church – in particular that the era of the visible church has ended. It is his assertion that all believers are commanded by God to depart from the church, since it is under the control of Satan and that God will no longer save and the Holy Spirit will no longer apply Christ's work within the context of the visible church. He portrays himself as the humble prophet, akin to Jeremiah, who does not relish the task, but now must tell people to leave the church. He believes that it is his calling.

In 1993, the Western Classis as well as the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States addressed the error of Mr. Camping in setting a specific date for the return of Christ. Mr. Camping was admonished and called to repent of this date-setting approach. He did not respond to this admonition. He did not repent. Rather, he has produced another in a series of books that slightly adjusts his teachings to support his latest assertions.¹

While we would like to dismiss this teaching as just the religious doctrine of another false teacher, we must address his errors and warn those who follow him. He is leading them into the danger of grievous sin. Furthermore, because his influence has specifically impacted Reformed and Presbyterian churches, it is important that we address this error, lest by our silence we could be seen to be in tacit agreement with it. Across the country, it is reported that many church members have followed his teaching and forsaken the assembly of the saints gathered in the visible, corporate church. Since he refused the admonitions and authority of the church himself and formed his own following more than a decade ago, his message to now repudiate the authority of the visible church comes easily for him. Unfortunately, he appeals to many others who also wish to be free from God-ordained ecclesiastical authority.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Harold Camping, president and co-founder of Family Stations, Inc., came to California from Colorado at a young age. He received a B. S. degree in civil engineering from the University of California in Berkeley in 1942. In 1958 he helped found Family Stations and some years later left his Camping Construction company to devote all of his time to the Family Radio ministry.

Early in his radio work, it might be said that he attempted to present the Reformed faith and to promote a biblical perspective in the programs and music aired on his radio station. Presently, his programming reaches all the great metropolitan areas in the United States, nearly anywhere in the world via short wave with broadcasts being translated into twelve languages, and daily television programs broadcast on stations in San Francisco and New York. The structure and outreach of Family Radio is impressive. What a shame that he no longer uses it to present the truth but now promotes schism.

A study of the history of Mr. Camping's teaching reveals that he has been obsessed with Christ's second coming as well as working with dates and chronologies. When it became apparent that he was forming a following of his own within a local Christian Reformed Church, he was asked not to teach his views on the return of Christ or face possible ecclesiastical discipline. Rather than submit to the church, he chose to leave the church and form the Alameda Reformed Bible Church, in Alameda, CA. He became its leader and they sought to join with some Reformed denomination. This attempt was unsuccessful for a number of reasons, especially due to Mr. Camping's use of an allegorical method of the interpretation of Scripture. Furthermore, for many years he has decried the liberalism and pentecostalism that had entered the church. Yet, while he taught that the seeking of "signs and wonders" was unbiblical, he has used this new interest as a "sign" that the church was increasingly apostate. Although he claims to hold an amillennial view of eschatology, his latest teaching seems to draw heavily from dispensational premillennialism. He views the visible, corporal church as parenthetical. According to him, God has

allowed Satan to prevail against the church. He recently admits that while some of the details of premillennialism regarding the end of the world were wrong, they were right about their teaching that the church age would come to an end. Instead of believers being raptured as they teach, he contends that the real biblical teaching is that believers will be driven from churches and/or commanded to depart from churches.²

Mr. Camping's recent teaching is not all that new. For many years he has taught that the church was decaying, and there were less and less true churches. Now he has come to the conclusion that **all** of the external, visible churches that exist on the face of the earth are **dead** and all true believers are to depart from them. He writes in his Addendum I to his short pamphlet statement, "Has the Era of the Church Age Come to an End?" the following shocking statement:

"But now the time has come when the era of the church ages has come to an end. The time has come for others to complete the task of world evangelism. And simultaneously with the end of the church age God has brought His judgment upon the churches. For more than 1900 years God has tolerated the wrong doctrines even as He tolerated the high places of Old Testament Israel. But now God has loosed Satan and through his deceptions churches all over the world have become apostate, following the desires of men rather than those of God. Satan has been allowed to marshal his forces to surround Jerusalem and destroy it. We have learned that the terms Jerusalem and Judea refer to the corporate external church."³

Mr. Camping conveniently uses his distinction between the "visible, temporal" Church, and the "invisible, eternal" Church to turn aside the arguments of those who attempt to refute this teaching. For him, it is only the invisible, spiritual church that still exists on earth. The visible church as we have known it for thousands of years is corrupt since it has "high places" and it assumes to itself a "spiritual authority" that is too great. He adamantly declares that true believers must not remain under the structure of the New Testament covenant model of the church, with officers, sacraments, preaching, and discipline. Furthermore, in the programming of Family Radio, he has censured all references to the organized, visible church and any references to a person being a pastor or minister of a church. He no longer broadcasts church services or recognizes the office of a minister of the Gospel. Many of those who worked at Family Radio for years and do not agree with this latest teaching have either voluntarily resigned or have been forced to leave. He seems thoroughly convinced in his position and aggressively promotes the same.

The question that we must ask Mr. Camping is one that he himself raises, "Do I have such a fear of God that I tremble before Him if I suspect a doctrine I hold may be contrary to the Word of God?"⁴ May God grant Mr. Camping the grace to fear God and to tremble exceedingly before Him for what he is doing to the bride of Christ.

THE CHURCH: GUARDIAN OF THE TRUTH

The preacher in the book of Ecclesiastics proclaimed; "*That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*"⁵ Though many are tempted to disagree with this seemingly pessimistic statement, it contains far more truth than we generally realize. Despite the great advances in many areas such as technology, medicine, etc., one quick scan of the daily newspaper will confirm this biblical insight. Mankind is still desperately wicked and the sinful thoughts, words, and deeds of our first parents are evident in their children's lives. Even the regenerate man, though radically changed (a new creation), is still susceptible to deception and temptation both from within⁶ and from without.⁷ God calls His people to conduct their lives with an awareness of this susceptibility, which both Scripture and history clearly illustrate. We must "*walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise*"⁸ for our adversary, the Devil, knows well what has worked in the past.

Has God, who is deeply concerned with truth (He is ultimately truth personified), entrusted the care of that truth into the hands of human beings?⁹ Indeed He has! He has authorized representatives to receive and record His truth (Scripture) as well as to continually promulgate and guard that truth "*once for all delivered to the saints*"¹⁰ throughout the millennia. Confidently we can affirm that God has committed this responsibility into the hands of the

visible, corporate church in general, and His commissioned and gifted representatives in particular, to proclaim and live the truth and to confront and reprove error in its many forms. We must exercise this responsibility in this situation as well.

THE REJECTION OF GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY

Due to the vast extent of audio and written material that Mr. Camping has produced in his effort to support his assertion,¹¹ we must narrow our focus to those foundational elements that support his argument. His claim either stands or falls based upon them. Interestingly, these elements can be organized around one key concept, that of authority. In essence, Camping has been laboring for years in an attempt to eliminate all earthly authority from exercising any type of power or rule over him. This includes not only human authority found in persons (pastors, elders, church courts, etc.) and documents such as creeds and confessions,¹² but extends even to the Bible as well. At the same time, he seems driven to teach and exercise some measure of controlling influence over those who are willing to listen to him.

Now it may come as quite a shock to those who have listened to Camping over the years to hear someone accuse him of rejecting the Bible as the ultimate authority. They would quickly come to Camping's defense using his own statements such as can be found in his latest book quoted earlier: "The essential issue is the authority of the Bible. Is the Bible truly the ultimate and final authority to which every true believer is subject?... We must remember that any doctrine we hold that is not faithful to the Bible is a lie."¹³ This statement is true! But if you continue to read, you will find the following qualification:

The Bible is the complete revelation of God's Word to the human race. We are not to add to it. We are not to take away from it. It alone and in its entirety is the Word of God. However, when we consider how we receive truth from the Bible, we have another matter altogether. God insists that there is a timetable known only to God by which He reveals the truths of the Bible to mankind (*italics added*).¹⁴

It is important to note the three significant elements present in this statement. First, by the use of the conjunction "however," Camping indicates that he is not satisfied with what he initially asserted, namely the sufficiency of Scripture. There is a need for something or someone else, namely an interpreter of the Bible. Second, by the use of the phrase "how we receive truth from the Bible," he elevates the importance of one's method of interpretation to an equal, if not superior, status as the Bible (ultimately it is his particular method that he has in mind). Also, in this phrase we detect a further suggestion that *the real truth of the Bible* is only understood through this proper method of interpretation. Third, he introduces the concept of a divine eschatological "timetable" by which God is now revealing "the truth of the Bible to mankind." Ultimately these three elements, each one related to authority, can be reduced to three words, namely person (authoritative interpreter or recipient of this new revelation or insight), method (interpretation), and timing (eschatology).

Furthermore, we again find these three elements in a section titled "progressive revelation." Notice their presence in the following passage:

In God's revelation, which is the Bible, God has a great many things to say about the end of the world and the details that lead up to the end of the world. But God has a timetable for the giving of understanding of these truths. The true meaning of these end-time statements is not to be revealed to the minds of men until the time of the end... Thus we can expect that in our day, when the signs are showing that we must be close to the end of time, the meaning of a great many Biblical passages should become revealed to the minds of careful, diligent students of the Bible. The very fact that we can find great harmony in our understanding of Biblical passages that heretofore have been very obscure greatly encourages us that God has placed us on the right track. We can expect, therefore, that many passages of the Bible which in earlier times have been somewhat mysterious, can now be understood (*italics added*).¹⁵

In other words, because he discerns that the "signs of the end of time" are present today (through his *method* of interpretation), we have entered a new epoch in history (*timing*) where God is again giving special

revelation to those who are “careful, diligent students of the Bible” like himself (*person*). The remainder of his book is an attempt to prove the validity of this claim of new, progressive revelation. Therefore, according to Camping, God’s authoritative Word to man is no longer simply the divinely inspired words located in the Bible, but rather the “true meaning” of those words understood through the use of these three elements. It is our contention that although he affirms “Sola Scriptura,” his latest teaching undermines this claim. Through the use of these three elements, he has become the ultimate authority in faith and life.

CAMPING’S EISEGETIC METHODOLOGY: ASSERTIONS, PROOF TEXTS, AND ALLEGORY

In many ways, the engine that drives the train of Camping’s thought is his method of interpretation. The other two elements, timing and person, are either related to it or are a result of its use. Apologist James White, in his excellent critique referenced earlier, understands its significance when he writes; “Without controversy, the central issues raised by the teachings of Harold Camping regarding the church and the end of the age are issues of interpretation.”¹⁶ He later astutely observes that “Camping’s allegorical interpretation is the heart and soul of his teaching and the source of the zeal of his followers as well.”¹⁷

But what exactly is this methodology? Again let us consider White’s helpful analysis in this regard. He summarizes Camping’s procedure as follows;

He will normally begin with a proposition, a statement, and then use a biblical passage to support his statement. This is the way of the eisegete (the one reading into the text rather than reading out of the text its natural meaning). He sets up a context, an assertion, and then expects the citation of the biblical passage to “prove” the point....Does Camping take the time to establish the connection? No, he does not. The connection exists solely because Harold Camping insists it does, nothing more. Solus Campingus.¹⁸

James White aptly uses this phrase, Solus Campingus, in his book as a way of emphasizing the extent to which Camping’s methodology governs his teaching. In many ways, it epitomizes the real issue at stake. Ultimately, Camping forces one to choose to submit to one authority or the other, either Sola Scriptura or Solus Campingus. There is no middle ground. Furthermore, Camping is not satisfied with mere assertions, he attempts to build his next argument upon the foundation of the previous statement. Mr. White explains:

But it should be realized that while we cannot begin to accept this kind of authoritarian, non-textually based eisegesis as having any relevance to the actual message of Scripture, Camping will use such assertions as the basis of his next level of “proof,” and then the next, and so on. He will glibly say, “Well, we have already seen how the Bible says this...” and then repeat a previously stated private opinion as if it is now the very Word of God itself. The result is a convoluted structure of utterly unfounded opinions masquerading as biblical exegesis.¹⁹

Unfortunately, most of Camping’s latest book on the subject under discussion is one long series of such unfounded arguments. He could be considered the king of “the petitio principii fallacy” (i.e. begging the question or assuming the conclusion in the premises of an argument).

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

We must also consider another aspect of this methodology that has been mentioned but not explained, that of allegory. Bernard Ramm, in his definitive textbook on interpretation, defines this aspect and the difficulties one faces with its use thus;

Allegorical interpretation believes that beneath the letter or the obvious is the meaning of the passage. Allegory is defined by some as an extended metaphor...If the writer states that he is writing an allegory and gives us the cue, or if the cue is very obvious, the problem of interpretation is not too difficult. But if we presume that the document has a secret meaning and there are no cues concerning the hidden meaning interpretation is difficult. In fact, the basic problem is to determine if the passage has such a meaning at all. The further problem arises whether the secret meaning was in the mind of the original writer or something found there by the interpreter. If there are no cues,

hints, connections, or other associations which indicate that the record is an allegory, and what the allegory intends to teach, we are on very uncertain grounds.²⁰

Obviously, this method is not new (“*there is nothing new under the sun*”), but has plagued the church for millennia. For example, in the first centuries after Christ, the early church fathers defended the conviction that the Old Testament was “a Christian document,”²¹ one given by God to substantiate their proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah. Unfortunately, in the process of attempting to prove this point, they turned to the allegorical method used by men such as Aristobulus (160 B.C.) and Philo (who died in about 54 A.D.). Later, new problems arose as they attempted to confront the growing gnostic errors that were sweeping the church. Ramm expertly illustrates the danger and dilemma they faced as follows:

The curse of the allegorical method is that it obscures the true meaning of the Word of God and had it not kept the Gospel truth central it would have become cultic and heretical. In fact, this is exactly what happened when the gnostics allegorized the New Testament. The Bible treated allegorically becomes putty in the hand of the exegete. Different doctrinal systems could emerge within the framework of allegorical hermeneutics and no way would exist to determine which were the true. This was precisely one of the problems in refuting the gnostics. The orthodox wished to allegorize the Old Testament, but not the New. The gnostics accused them of inconsistency. The only method of breaking an exegetical stalemate created by the use of the allegorical method is to return to the sober, proper and literal interpretation of the Scriptures. (italics added)²²

We could not agree more. This plague would arise from time to time and the church would have to gird up her loins and fight against it. For example, in a number of places in the commentaries and other writings of John Calvin,²³ we observe him battling with many persons who relied on this methodology. His historical insights as well as his response to the contemporary situation he faced are extremely useful to our present task. As he considered Paul’s use of the term allegory in Galatians 4:22-24, Calvin wrote;

But as the apostle declares that these things are allegorized, Origen, and many others along with him, have seized the occasion of torturing Scripture, in every possible manner, away from the true sense. They concluded that the literal sense is too mean and poor, and that, under the outer bark of the letter, there lurk deeper mysteries, which cannot be extracted but by beating out allegories. And this they had no difficulty in accomplishing; for speculations which appear to be ingenious have always been preferred, and always will be preferred, by the world to solid doctrine.

With such approbation the licentious system gradually attained such a height, that he who handled Scripture for his own amusement not only was suffered to pass unpunished, but even obtained the highest applause. For many centuries no man was considered to be ingenious, who had not the skill and daring necessary for changing into a variety of curious shapes the sacred word of God. This was undoubtedly a contrivance of Satan to undermine the authority of Scripture, and to take away from the reading of it the true advantage. God visited this profanation by a just judgment, when he suffered the pure meaning of the Scripture to be buried under false interpretations.

Scripture, they say, is fertile, and thus produces a variety of meanings. I acknowledge that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom; but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man, at his pleasure, may assign. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions, which lead us away from the natural meaning.²⁴

It is amazing how relevant these comments are to our discussion (“*there is nothing new under the sun*”). Furthermore, since Mr. Camping claims to be Reformed, he should give serious consideration to Calvin’s comments on 2 Cor. 3:6. Calvin warns:

For the letter killeth. This passage was mistakenly perverted, first by Origen, and afterwards by others, to a spurious signification. From this arose a very pernicious error — that of imagining that the perusal of Scripture would be not merely useless, but even injurious, unless it were drawn out into allegories. This error was the source of many evils. For there was not merely a liberty allowed of adulterating the genuine meaning of Scripture, but the more of audacity any one had in this manner of acting, so much the more eminent an interpreter of Scripture was he accounted. Thus many of the ancients recklessly played with the sacred word of God, as if it had been a ball to be tossed to and fro. In consequence of this, too, heretics had it more in their power to trouble the Church; for as it had

become general practice to make any passage whatever mean anything that one might choose, there was no frenzy so absurd or monstrous, as not to admit of being brought forward under some pretext of allegory. Even good men themselves were carried headlong, so as to contrive very many mistaken opinions, led astray through a fondness for allegory.²⁵

The real issue that we face with Mr. Camping is one of authority. Through the use of his method, which includes assertion, proof texts ripped out of context, and allegory;²⁶ the authority of Scripture is undermined and the authority of the interpreter and teacher is exalted. Again James White's observations are worth repeating: Allegorical interpretation destroys biblical authority. It replaces the divine message with the imaginations of the interpreter, and as such opens the door wide for every kind of abuse of the text. False teachers, seeking to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30), utilize such means to release themselves from the unchanging standards of God's Word and insert, under the guise of "thus sayeth the Lord," their own pet doctrines and teachings. The Christian who is untaught and unstable, a novice in the Word, can easily be taken in by such a teacher who exudes confidence and often hides the false teachings behind a veneer of self-professed orthodoxy.²⁷

Having examined the first of these three elements that form the basis or foundation for this teaching of Mr. Camping – his method of interpretation – we will next consider the other two elements, namely timing (eschatology) and person (authority).

ARE WE LIVING IN A NEW AGE?

That Mr. Camping has had a fascination (bordering on an obsession) with eschatology over the years can be easily verified by a simple scan of two of his earlier books such as "1994?" and "Are You Ready?."²⁸ If Mr. Camping simply taught his position on the second coming of Christ and allowed others to agree or disagree with him, the situation would be far less serious than it has become. Unfortunately, he considers his current teaching to be of such importance that specific action is required. For example, after mentioning that in the past, one's eschatological position could be held with no action except mere intellectual assent, he claims that because of the time we now live (a new age), one's response must be different. He writes:

However, as the Biblical details of the end of the world as set forth in this study are considered, it should be emphatically noted that action on the part of the reader is required. Thus, this study should not be considered simply as an eschatological position that discussed the great event of the end of the world as coming some unknown time in the future. Rather, it is a very carefully developed Biblical eschatological position that requires immediate decisive action on the part of the believers who understand the truth of this study and who have an intense desire to be obedient to all the commands of the Bible.²⁹

In other words, if one believes that Camping's eschatological position is correct, one must take action, which according to Camping is to "leave his local church and continue to serve God as His ambassador outside of the churches and congregations."³⁰ But is he correct? Have we entered a "new age" where God is at work in a unique and different way? Because of the serious nature of both the claim and his required response, we must carefully examine their validity.

What is the basis of this emphatic declaration? Among other factors in his teaching, Camping presents a number of "signs of the times" that point to the passing of the church age. Chief among these signs is the apparent success of non-church ministries such as his own Family Radio in proclaiming the Gospel. As a matter of fact, in his first pamphlet on this subject, we are informed that a ministry like Family Radio is "becoming more and more useful to the Lord," that it "appears to be increasingly blessed as it is able to share the true Gospel," and that its presentation is "robust" and "healthy."³¹ He boldly asserts that:

Because we witness this phenomena by a ministry such as Family Radio which in no sense is under the authority of the church and which tries to be faithful to the Bible as possible, we can know that we are in that time of the great tribulation. The next event will be the return of Christ and the end of the world.³²

How does he reach such a conclusion? Simply by ignoring the biblical and historical data concerning the visible church's God-given roles and responsibility. Camping reduces the purpose of the church to the proclamation

of the Gospel. But is this the full extent of the church's calling according to the Bible? Let's briefly consider the following. First, as you may recall from our previous survey of the Old and New Testament as well as subsequent church history, it is the visible church that has been entrusted by God with not only the proclamation of the truth but also with the guarding or protection of the same. This guarding the truth against errors in doctrine and life has been given to the visible church by God himself. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter, who was functioning as a spokesman for the other Apostles; "*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*"³³ Thus, it is to the God-ordained officers of the church that the "keys of the kingdom" have been entrusted.³⁴ By eliminating the church, Camping has effectively removed the God-ordained protective means for the truth. We have returned to the era when "every man does that which is right in his own eyes." According to Camping's teaching, there is no God-ordained, authoritative guardian of the truth on earth. Does he really mean to teach this?

Second, another role that God has established for the church is that of the exercise of mercy and service. The responsibilities of promoting and guarding the truth concern not only word but also deed. Thus the church has also been called by God to exercise diaconal or mercy ministries to both believers and unbelievers³⁵ and has raised up the office of deacon to oversee this work.³⁶ Furthermore, according to the Apostle Paul, God has blessed the church "*with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*"³⁷ He has gifted the saints³⁸ and has provided the church as a place to exercise those various gifts and talents for the mutual edification of the whole body of Christ.³⁹ How can an organization such as Family Radio fulfill these roles on a local level?

Finally, God has ordained the church as the gathering place for the corporate worship of God, including the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. To teach otherwise is to ignore both Scripture and history. The burden of proof resides with Mr. Camping to prove the assumption that non-church ministries such as Family Radio are God-ordained institutions in the first place. Success does not necessarily determine legitimacy. One needs only consider the success and growth of cults such as the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses to understand this fact. The assumption that success determines legitimacy or truth is but one of the many twenty-first century American cultural assumptions that are evident in Mr. Camping's teaching. In other words, much of what he teaches reflects the assumptions of the culture in which he lives.⁴⁰ This could also explain why so many blindly accept his doctrines because his thinking resonates with their own unexamined cultural assumptions. They would be wise to consider the insights of C. S. Lewis when he stated that:

Most of all, perhaps, we need intimate knowledge of the past. Not that the past has any magic about it, but because we cannot study the future, and yet need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much which seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion. A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village: the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age.⁴¹

But what about his claim that "we are in that time of the great tribulation" and that "the next event will be the return of Christ and the end of the world." Shouldn't we take into consideration the times in which we live, that the second coming of Jesus Christ will occur at any moment? To the present writer, who experienced the excitement and subsequent disappointment of dispensational eschatological predictions in the late 70's and early 80's, Camping's claims seem strangely familiar. What should be our response? Again, the Preacher's statement "*there is nothing new under the sun*"⁴² has great relevance in this discussion. Although we agree that the Lord Jesus Christ will return as he has promised, it is foolish and even dangerous to overturn solid biblical teaching on the role and responsibility of the visible church based upon the latest speculation about the end of the world. History is full of men who were convinced that they lived in the end times and attempted to persuade others of the correctness of their position. History proved them wrong. We recommend to the reader Gary Demar's excellent book that points out "the folly of trying to predict when Christ will return" appropriately titled *Last Days Madness*. In it we find the following quote by W. Ward Gasque that addresses this issue:

The problem with the evangelicals who turn the Bible into a kind of crystal ball is that they show very little historical awareness. They speak assuredly about the signs that are being fulfilled "right before your very eyes" and

point to the impending end... However, these writers do not seem to be aware that there have been many believers in every generation—from the Montanists of the second century through Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) and Martin Luther to those Russian Mennonites who undertook a “Great Trek” to Siberia in 1880-1884 and the nineteenth-century proponents of dispensationalism—who have believed that they were living in the days immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. So far they have all been mistaken. How many people have lost confidence in clear doctrines of Scripture affecting eternal life because misguided prophetic teaching is, unfortunately, not likely to be investigated.⁴³

The power or validity of Camping’s assertion of a “new age” or a “time of the great tribulation” is the assumption of cultural presuppositions and an ignorance of the past. He has committed the *argumentum ad novitatem* fallacy (appeal to newness) which “argues that something is best because it is newest.”⁴⁴ We must reject Camping’s argument as fallacious and now turn to the third foundational element of his latest error.

BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

What is the least mentioned and yet the most assumed element of Camping’s teaching? It can be summarized as person or authority. One question that arose during our preparations for these articles was “besides God himself, who exercises authority over what Mr. Camping teaches and does?” Ultimately, the answer seems to be no one except Mr. Camping. At the same time, he projects the expectation that everyone else must listen to him and accept what he is saying as true.⁴⁵ In other words, he seems to have a great need to exercise teaching authority over others. As we declared earlier; “In essence, Camping has been laboring for years in an attempt to eliminate all earthly authority from exercising any type of power or rule over him. This includes not only human authority found in persons (pastors, elders, church courts, etc.) and documents such as creeds and confessions, but extends even to the Bible as well. At the same time, he seems driven to teach and exercise some measure of controlling influence over those who are willing to listen to him.” Let us consider this statement in detail.

How has he succeeded in removing all earthly authority? First, we must remind the reader of our previous discussion concerning Camping’s method of interpretation that effectively turns the Bible, using the words of Bernard Ramm, into “putty in the hand of the exegete.”⁴⁶ If the Bible can be made to say whatever the interpreter desires, ultimately its authority has been transferred to the exegete, in this instance, to Mr. Camping. Second, through this new revelation, Camping claims that God has removed all earthly, spiritual authority. “No longer are you to be under the spiritual rulership of the church.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, Camping identifies church documents such as creeds and confessions, intended to summarize what the Bible teaches and to serve as standards by which the church can guard against false doctrine and false teachers, as sinful “high places.” He goes so far as to assert that faithful adherence to these documents is a sign that the church has established “idolatrous high places” and that God has judged and rejected the church due to this “sin.” In effect, according to Camping, there are no earthly authorities to whom he must listen and obey.

At the same time, Camping has effectively established himself as the ultimate spiritual authority on earth. How so? By claiming that through his own effort and study of the Scriptures, God has given him new revelation that must be obeyed. How can this charge be substantiated? By four factors that can be discerned in his writing and teaching. First is his unrelenting desire and even need to teach. “I must teach what I have learned” could be considered a condensation of this compulsion. We must ask, however, is this desire to teach all that is necessary to become a teacher? The Bible maintains otherwise.⁴⁸ Second, one discerns the view that because he can teach (via Family Radio), God must want him to teach. In other words, “ability means authority” or more crassly “might makes right.” This again is a reflection of American cultural assumptions, not biblical truth. Third, as we have noted above, when he uses the phrase “the Bible teaches,” what he really means is “what I have discerned or understand what the Bible teaches.” For him, it is his understanding of biblical teaching that is ultimate truth. Fourth, he insists that God commands all true believers to obey what has been revealed to him. This insistence is nothing less than the attempt to exercise unquestioned power over those who would listen to him. To summarize, Camping attempts to exercise ultimate spiritual authority over true believers because he believes that God has gifted and enabled him to do so, and he recognizes no other earthly spiritual authority that can challenge this position. He has become God’s

spokesman or prophet to the world.⁴⁹

A CAMPINGITE CULT?

What about those who believe and conform to this teaching? While following Mr. Camping outside the visible, corporal churches, are they in danger of following him into a cult similar to those such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons? In other words, is Mr. Camping engaged in forming a cult? To answer these questions we must consider the criteria of a cult. They include:

1. **Extra-biblical authority.** First, his teachings by allegory and numerology add many new doctrines to the Bible which were never intended by God. Every verse of Scripture is subject to interpretation by a "deeper spiritual meaning" which Mr. Camping alone has seen and now teaches others to discern as well. Very little Scripture means what is understood in the normal historical/exegetical context, but is only an allegory of something else. When Mr. Camping claims that one must follow the "Bible alone," the next paragraph begins with "However..." As stated earlier, he claims that "God has a timetable for the giving of understanding of these truths."⁵⁰ He proceeds to say,

"Thus, we can expect that in our day, when the signs are showing that we must be close to the end time, the meaning of a great many Biblical passages should become revealed to the minds of careful, diligent students of the Bible. The very fact that we can find great harmony in our understanding of Biblical passages that heretofore have been very obscure greatly encourages us that God has placed us on the right track. We can expect, therefore, that many passages of the Bible which in earlier times have been somewhat mysterious, can now be understood."⁵¹

While man's knowledge of Scripture might progress, it is certainly not true that God's holds back certain portions of His Word from man's understanding until a certain time in history. This progressive revelation principle which Mr. Camping holds is an assault on both the sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture and an affront on those who seek to faithfully exegete the Word of God.

Second, a cult repudiates all outside authority but its own. To accomplish this, a restructuring or elimination of the offices that Christ instituted for the church is necessary. Furthermore, cults are characterized by an unteachable attitude. In regards to Mr. Camping, he has been admonished to repent by many within the Christian community but has not listened. He claims that he has discovered God's command, it is not to be debated, it is not subject to analysis by theologians, it is simply to be obeyed. Any disagreement with Mr. Camping is used as evidence that the church truly is the dwelling-place of Satan. Any authority voiced by the church is evidence that the Church is a "high place" and one must flee from this type of idolatry. The only authority left is the Bible as interpreted by Mr. Camping. This is precisely the approach that the Jehovah's Witnesses took when they declared that they would be using only the Bible in their view of the kingdom. They too have no churches, only Kingdom Halls.

Third, it is interesting to note that while warning listeners not to read any books about the Bible, but rather to search the Bible alone, Mr. Camping has managed to produce a large number of books and pamphlets explaining or expounding biblical doctrines. These materials are energetically published, promoted, and distributed by Family Radio. At what point will this literature become essential or even required reading for anyone who desires the "correct understanding of the Scriptures?" When will they begin, if they haven't already, to be held in the same esteem as the Jehovah's Witnesses esteem the literature produced by the Watch Tower and Tract Society? In other words, when will the teaching of Mr. Camping come to be held on par with Sacred Scripture or at least as the essential guide to understanding Scripture?

2. **Denial of justification by grace through faith alone.** Although claiming to hold this doctrine, it is clear that works have become essential to salvation. For example, if one does not believe that he *must* depart from the church, he is disobeying God and could not be saved. God will no longer save through the ministry of the organized church, no matter how faithful the particular pastor might be in his preaching. It is a faith plus works that saves now. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit is now limited. He has declared that the Holy Spirit no longer will save

through the ministry of the church, but he will save through the ministry of individuals, such as Mr. Camping's ministry.

3. The devaluation of the person and work of Christ. Mr. Camping teaches that Christ is *not bodily* at the right hand of God where He would continue to serve as our Mediator today. Christ has only a spiritual glorified body. In his "end of the church" theology, Camping declares that Christ the Head has been separated from the body of the church. The church, as addressed in the Scriptures was always seen as the visible church who were described as the covenant people of God. This covenant is ignored by Mr. Camping. There are no more sacraments of Baptism or Lord's Supper. Interestingly, he holds to a continued evangelism through efforts like Family Radio, but explains away the command in the great commission to baptize those who believe. In both of the sacraments, Mr. Camping has long denied that they are "seals" of the covenant of grace.

4. A view that they are the exclusive community of those saved. Mr. Camping teaches that the Holy Spirit no longer will save through the ministry of the visible church, no matter how faithful the preaching might be. Only those who leave the church now are obedient and only they can be saved by ministries like Family Radio. He leaves no room for other ministries, but his own. The visible, organized church no longer has any authority. There are no officers – minister, elder, or deacon. The church is reduced to a "fellowship" where it may be beneficial to gather for study, prayer, and song, but it is not required.

As any cult, Mr. Camping will no doubt have to "adjust" his teachings of the Bible (easily done since he has declared that revelation is progressive). Already he has declared in a lecture aired on Family Radio, that the 4th Commandment is no longer required of believers. That solves the problem of what to do on Sunday. No doubt, more declarations will be forthcoming. A cult is not afraid to take an isolated position. Actually, this is their identity – the martyr syndrome. Anyone who differs is seen to engage in personal attacks or simply does not believe the teachings of the Bible. In the prefaces to both of the books referred to earlier, Mr. Camping presents himself as the martyr who simply must tell the truth, no matter what the outcome, since the church has refused (or has been unable) to address these teachings.

5. The centrality of the role of eschatology and the importance of a particular cult in eschatology. Date-setting has been a main focus of Mr. Camping for years. He claimed that Christ would return in September of 1994, but now he claims that Christ merely left the corporal church. It is only those who depart from those churches (and continue to be fed by Mr. Camping) who will be saved. His views about the return of Christ, the non-physical resurrection body, and the matter of a judgment day are all interwoven with an erroneous view of eschatology. It is interesting to note that the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah Witnesses had predictions of Christ's return between 1843 and 1844 and 1914 respectively. When history proved them wrong, both groups figured a way out of this embarrassment by explaining that the date was right, but what took place on that date was different than first anticipated. Mr. Camping has followed suit with his latest prediction. Apparently he ignores the warning in Deuteronomy 18:21, 22, "*And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*"

OTHER ERRORS

It should be noted that the egregious error of calling believers to leave the visible church is not an isolated doctrinal error. For the most part, the teachings of Mr. Camping can best be described as "Gnostic." In Gnosticism the physical was of little importance. It was always the spiritual that was seen as good. They denied that Christ had a real body. Are the followers of Mr. Camping gullible enough to believe that he has been able to see the deeper spiritual meaning of Scripture and it is this special knowledge that reveals the real way of salvation?

His philosophical gnostic view is further aggravated by his constant allegorical interpretations of the Bible,

so that the average person would never gain a clear knowledge of what the Bible teaches unless they follow the teachings or writings of Mr. Camping. The follower becomes completely dependent on the leader's insights. His exegesis of some passages is sometimes just the opposite of what God intended. One example is Matt. 5:32 in which an exception is made inclusive. In defending his own idea that all divorce is forbidden, he has taken the words, "saving for the cause of fornication" and insists that the real meaning is, "*including* for the cause of fornication."⁵² Another example is I Tim. 3:15 which says that the *church* is the "pillar and ground of the truth." Because of his bias against church authority, he has declared that the church has always misinterpreted this verse. He alleges that it is *God* alone who is the "pillar and ground of the truth."⁵³ This is a serious, mistaken exegesis. In this veiled attempt to elevate God, he has reduced Him. *God is the Truth*, not just the pillar and ground of it. God sent His Holy Spirit to dwell with, guide, and comfort His Church. Jesus said that the "gates of hell" would not prevail against the church. Mr. Camping has reinterpreted and spiritualized this. He says that it does not mean the visible church, but the spiritual, eternal church.⁵⁴ We would not disagree that this reference is to true believers in Christ. But, these believers are also part of a corporate body that worships together. The church is not just an organism, but an organization as well. Christ has ordained that it should be governed by officers, and according to certain structure. Mr. Camping denies that the local, corporate church is the Bride of Christ.⁵⁵ Now, certainly, there are hypocrites in the local church, but Christ will separate those who merely cry "Lord, Lord..." from those who truly love and serve Christ the Lord. Mr. Camping has taken it upon himself to perform this judgment now – those who depart from the church now are the true spiritual church – the true Body of Christ.

Is Mr. Camping a perfectionist? The fact that Mr. Camping has declared that the offices of the church are no longer present, one can only assume some sort of perfectionism among his followers that will not require the oversight and discipline of the church as in the past. There would be no structure left to perform it.

The damage to the fellowship of the church is incredible. It is akin to saying to one part of the body, "I don't need you." (Cf. I Cor. 12:14-27) Christians do need one another, for their counsel and help. They also need to be there to help other believers in need. By isolating his followers from those who might teach them otherwise they are insulated from anyone who might call them to repent of their actions. In fact, Mr. Camping assumes that those who leave the church will be disciplined, but counsels his followers not to worry. The elders of the church no longer have authority. This is one area that appeals to many of Mr. Camping's followers. They are untouchable.

To refute the teachings of Mr. Camping is like trying to unscramble an egg. Nearly every verse is distorted or taken out of context to suit his pre-conceived conclusions. Scripture is alleged to be an allegory filled with "hidden truths" that require someone of Mr. Camping's unique talents and insight to uncover. Very little Scripture means what it says, but according to Mr. Camping, there is a "deeper spiritual meaning" to every passage. If you don't agree with his conclusions, you are just dismissed as one who does not agree with the Bible. So, he maintains his position of "the Bible alone" while pouring his own agenda and convoluted exegesis into it. This uniqueness appeals to many who view this as real depth of scholarship that is just not found in churches today.

In many ways we see in Mr. Camping the sin of Korah, who disregarded the God-given authority of Moses and declared that all the people are holy. They are all given authority. The distinction between the general office of a believer and the special offices in the church has been erased. Woe to the person who would dare to assume the office of a prophet by himself (see Num. 16:28-35). Mr. Camping has not been called by anyone or ordained to the office of world evangelist. He has not undergone an examination as to his orthodoxy, nor does he submit to any ecclesiastical authority for what he teaches.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Again we can encapsulate our response through the words of Solomon; "*there is nothing new under the sun.*" Church history provides many examples of false teachers who were convinced of the rightness of their views. More importantly, God himself warned the church that men like Mr. Camping would arise. For example, the Apostle Paul charged the Ephesian elders; "*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the*

*Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*⁵⁶ Mr. Camping is one such man who now stands outside the flock of God and calls the sheep to follow him. He is engaging in schism, and dividing the Body of Christ, an act that God declares that He hates.⁵⁷

To fulfill our calling to guard the truth, we must challenge Mr. Camping to answer questions such as: What is your authorization to teach such things? The Bible informs us that God has placed all mankind under delegated human authority (this includes spheres such as family, state, and church). Because of our sinful nature (total depravity), a man who exercises authority must be under authority to protect both himself as well as others from error and deception. Since you have repudiated your office of elder, what reason can you give as to why anyone ought to listen to you? Since you are a fallible man, how does anyone correct you when you are wrong? How can biblical discipline such as that which was given by Jesus Christ Himself (Matt 18:15-18) be carried out?⁵⁸ You are in great danger of self deception and even greater danger of coming under the judgment of Christ; *“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”*⁵⁹

When did God stop viewing believers as sheep in need of protection?⁶⁰ If they are still considered sheep, where are the shepherds? If you say that Christ is the only shepherd, then God has radically changed His way of dealing with His people based upon one man’s “insights.” Why are you the only one who has this insight? If God has so completely changed the way he takes care of His people, shouldn’t that change have been communicated to many rather than to only one man? We understand that Scripture teaches that safety is found in the sheepfold, danger and death are found outside. For example, the Apostle refers to the removal of a member from the church as delivering *“such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.”*⁶¹ Are you not guilty of endangering the sheep of His pasture by your erroneous teaching?

To those who are followers of Camping, you must actively pursue a process of evaluation and renewal. This process should include the following:

1. What doctrines did Camping emphasize that contradict biblical Reformed teaching? Instead of assuming that Camping must be right when he finds fault with phrases in the Reformed creeds and confessions, consider that he is only one man who is under no authority sitting in judgment of documents that have stood the test of time and controversy.
2. Why does he place such emphasis on certain doctrines as being essential to the faith, especially those doctrines that have been debated among Reformed theologians for centuries (for example, his view of divorce)? Why does he make them the litmus test of orthodoxy?
3. His allegorical method of interpretation is suspect at best. You must begin to retrain your mind to put off vain speculations that this method engenders and approach the Bible with a method that submits to the authority of the original intent of the writer (and ultimately God) and not to the opinions of the interpreter.
4. Be aware that Camping’s methods and teaching tend to engender an attitude of superiority and arrogance. On the contrary, God desires a humble and teachable spirit. Some have likened Camping’s teaching to that of the Gnostic heretics of the second and third century A.D., who emphasized that they alone had secret knowledge and that others must join them in that knowledge.

To the rest of the church, we are again witnesses of the fallibility and sinfulness of man. We must be ever vigilant and guard the truth, or as Jude wrote *“to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”* The courts of the church must confront Camping and his erroneous teaching and declare to the watching world God’s evaluation and judgment against such heresy.

In 1994, the Western Classis confronted, admonished and called Mr. Camping to repentance for the fruit of his method of interpretation, namely unscriptural date-setting for the second coming of Christ. He has never repented from this error. On the contrary, his latest teaching is the fruit of that previous failed prophecy. The Church is bound according to the teaching of Titus 3:10 and 11 to admonish him a second time. Thereafter, if he does not repent, he should be formally declared a heretic and his teaching rejected as heresy. As stated earlier, the blood of many will rest on his head and the church must call for repentance on his part and on the part of those who have been bought into his heresy.

It has been and continues to be our prayer that God would show mercy to Mr. Harold Camping by opening his eyes and his heart to see the error of his position and to grant unto him repentance. If not, then may God stop him from continuing to attack the precious bride of Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Special Committee to study Harold Camping's view of the church

Recommendations (as modified by the Western Classis):

1. *Since the allegorical/progressive method of the interpretation of Scripture employed by Mr. Harold Camping is an assault on the perspicuity and sufficiency of Scripture, it reduces the authority of the plain words of Scripture to his own designs and thereby renders its teaching ambiguous and destitute of all certitude and finality, we therefore reject both his hermeneutical method and his concept of progressive revelation.*
2. *Since Mr. Camping's view of the Church contradicts the clear teachings of the Bible, which are also summarized in the Reformed creeds, we must vehemently declare that such teachings are a perilous heresy.*
3. *Since Mr. Camping calls believers to depart from the visible, corporal church, we hereby warn all who might heed such a call, that they do so at their soul's peril and in disobedience to Christ who has His Church as a visible, corporal body with authority to bring the means of grace to His people.*
4. *That Mr. Camping be rebuked a second time, and lovingly called to repent his unscriptural view of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest that in keeping with Titus 3:10-11, he be declared and regarded as an heretic, should he not repent of his false methods and teachings.*
5. *That all churches of the Western Classis be informed of these recommendations and that a final version of this report be printed in the 2003 Abstract of Classis.*
6. *That our fraternal churches in the West be informed of these recommendations and that a copy of the Abstract containing this report be sent to them.*
7. *That the recommendations with the final version of this report be sent to the 257th meeting of Synod for confirmation and use in all the churches.*

These recommendations were adopted by the RCUS Western Classis at their 18th annual meeting held on March 6, 2003.

END NOTES

- ¹ *The End of the Church Age...And After*, by Harold Camping (Oakland, California; Family Stations, Inc., 2002)
- ² *Ibid.*, pg. xiii
- ³ *Has the Era of the Church Age Come to an End?* By Harold Camping (Oakland, California; Family Stations, Inc.)
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xvii
- ⁵ Eccl. 1:9
- ⁶ “the law of sin in my members” (Rom. 7:23), “the flesh” (Rom. 7:25; Gal. 5:17;), etc.
- ⁷ Matt. 24:24
- ⁸ Eph. 5:15
- ⁹ See *Reformed Herald*, September 2002 - December 2002.
- ¹⁰ Jude 3
- ¹¹ For example, his most recent book on the subject is over 370 pages long.
- ¹² Note how effective his latest teaching would be in accomplishing this goal, if one grants that he is correct.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pg. xvii.
- ¹⁴ pg. xix.
- ¹⁵ pg. xx-xxi.
- ¹⁶ White, pg. 46.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 64-65.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, by Bernard Ramm (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), pg. 24.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 29.
- ²² *Ibid.*, pg. 30-31.
- ²³ Consider Calvin’s remarks on the following Scriptures in his Commentaries (Genesis 2:8; Daniel 8:24-25; and 1 Cor. 9:9) and in Book 2, Chapter 19 of his Institutes of the Christian Religion.
- ²⁴ Commentaries on the Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians by John Calvin (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996), p.135-6).
- ²⁵ Commentaries of John Calvin on the Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians by John Calvin (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996), p.174-5.
- ²⁶ Mr. White summarizes this methodology as ‘Eisegesis, coupled with unfounded assertions, mixed with fanciful allegories: This is the substance of Harold Camping’s “Bible teaching.”’ *Ibid.*, pg. 79.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 57.
- ²⁸ For an excellent evaluation of the first of these books, refer to the report by the “Special Committee To Study Mr. Harold Camping’s View On The Return Of Christ, ‘Probably’ in 1994” found in the 1993 Abstract of the Minutes of the 8th Annual Session of the Western Classis (RCUS), pg. 67-78.
- ²⁹ *The End of the Church Age...And After*, by Harold Camping (Oakland, California; Family Stations, Inc., 2002), pg. xv.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Has the Era of the Church Age Come to an End?* by Harold Camping (Oakland, California; Family Stations, Inc.), pg. 3, 4.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pg. 18
- ³³ Matthew 16:19
- ³⁴ *Heidelberg Catechism* question # 83 rightly explains that the keys of the Kingdom: are “the preaching of the Holy Gospel and Christian discipline; by these two the Kingdom of Heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.”
- ³⁵ 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15; Galatians 6:10; etc.
- ³⁶ Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:8-13
- ³⁷ Ephesians 1:3
- ³⁸ Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11
- ³⁹ Eph. 4:1-16
- ⁴⁰ Other examples include a lack of covenantal consciousness, the disdain and even rejection of authority, etc.
- ⁴¹ *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, by C. S. Lewis (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1949), pg. 50-51.
- ⁴² Eccl. 1:9
- ⁴³ *Last Days Madness: The Folly Of Trying To Predict When Christ Will Return* by Gary Demar (Brentwood, Tennessee, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publisher, Inc., 1991), pg. 4.
- ⁴⁴ *A Christian Guide To Critical Thinking*, by Henry A. Virkler (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1993), pg. 194.

Considering our present discussion, it is interesting to note that Virkler adds “It is widely used in advertising.”

⁴⁵ He even goes so far as to say that there is no debating his teaching. He writes: “Thus, we learn that the command to leave Jerusalem (the corporate external church), is not to be debated. It is to be obeyed. This command is not subject to analysis by the brilliant intellectual minds of theologians. It is to be obeyed.” *The End of the Church Age... and After*, pg. 242.

⁴⁶ *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, by Bernard Ramm (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), p. 24.

⁴⁷ *Has the Era of the Church Age Come to an End?* By Harold Camping (Oakland, California; Family Stations, Inc.), pg. 20

⁴⁸ Refer to the *Reformed Herald*, November 2002 (part 3 of the series *The Church - Guardian of the Truth*).

⁴⁹ Although Camping avoids this title, preferring to be known simply as a teacher, it is nonetheless accurate. The question that must be raised is what kind of prophet is he? He has avoided references to his previous predictions as prophetic in order to escape the charge of being a false prophet (due to his failures in the past). Yet when we consider the weight of authority that he places on his own insights (“Progressive Revelation” as he calls it) as well as his assumption of authority to command believers that they must obey God’s revelation through him, is he not functioning as a prophet even if he avoids the title?

⁵⁰ *The End*, pg. xxi

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *What God Hath Joined Together ...* By Harold Camping (Oakland, CA, Family Stations, Inc. 1985), pp. 23-25.

⁵³ *The End*, pp. 267-270.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 282ff.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 283 ff.

⁵⁶ Acts 20:28-30

⁵⁷ Prov. 6:18-20

⁵⁸ According to your teaching, the only discipline that anyone can exercise with you is refusing to buy your product (turning off your broadcast and not supporting your ministry).

⁵⁹ Matt. 18:6-7

⁶⁰ Psalm 95:7, Psalm 100:3; Isaiah 53:6-7; Jer. 23:1-5, 50:6-7; Ezek. 34; Matt. 9:36, 10:16; John 10, 21:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:25

⁶¹ 1 Cor. 5:5
