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**How One Man Brought
Three Critical False Doctrines
Into a Church of God**

The largest church of God in modern times, the Worldwide Church of God, suffered from three critical false doctrines brought into the church by one man, evangelist Dr. Herman L Hoeh. These were instrumental in leading to division in the church and finally to its demise. These three false doctrines were the direct result of slight of hand interpretations, or just plain lies. He failed “to rightly divide the Word of Truth.” Rather, he twisted and distorted the scriptures and created false doctrines. Because he was accepted as an eminent scholar, his views were accepted and very few challenged his conclusions, yet he apparently did this in order to be politically correct with the leadership of the church.

- 1) **A Monday Pentecost.** The church leader, Herbert W. Armstrong originally miscounted the 50 day count to Pentecost and assumed that it fell on a Monday. HLH accommodated HWA, believing that “an apostle’s” error was inspired truth. In order to justify this erroneous count, in Leviticus 23, he deliberately misinterpreted the term “the Sabbath,” Hebrew, *ha shabbat*, to read “week,” Hebrew, *shavua*. Thereby, making it possible to have partial, or imperfect weeks, for the counting of the seven weeks and Sabbaths to Pentecost. Thus, making “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath” to read as “the morrow after the seventh week”—a Monday. This erroneous count then incorrectly made Pentecost “on the morrow after the seventh first day of the week.” For forty years the WCG kept Pentecost on the wrong day. Then in 1974, a special ministerial conference was held to correct this mistake. At that time HLH admitted that he had done this because he believed that HWA’s error was inspired truth. Which it was not. The WCG then changed to the correct day, and began to follow the scriptural instructions to begin the count of the 50 days on [beginning with] the first day of the week—then seven complete weeks were to be counted, each week ending in a weekly Sabbath, or 49 days. However, the total count was to be 50 days; and the 50th day was “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath”—not the seventh week. The correct count always makes Pentecost fall on the first day of the week after the seventh Sabbath. It is the only first day of the week that the church is to keep—a special holy day.
- 2) **Falsely Claiming that the year of the Crucifixion to fall in 31 AD instead of the correct year of 30 AD.** This mistake was an old doctrine that HWA had accepted from the SDA’s—an Ellen G. White error. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ was crucified on the Passover day, in the middle of the week—a Wednesday. However, according the Hebrew Calculated Calendar, the Passover of 31 AD fell on a Monday, March 26. It did not fall on a Wednesday in that year. HLH then proceeded to analyze some obscure Rabbinic arguments about the cycle of the leap years of the Hebrew Calendar. He completely misinterpreted their arguments and declared that in 142 AD the Jewish calendar officials changed the leap cycle, which the Rabbis never did. With this slight of hand, HLH could then make it falsely appear that the Passover in 31 AD fell on a Wednesday and not on a Monday. However, just before HLH died in 2004 in a letter to Michael Geramono he confessed to what he had done and admitted that he was wrong. He admitted that Jesus was not crucified in 31 AD, but rather 30 AD, April 5, which is the correct historical date.

- 3) **Changing the Nature of God the Father and Jesus Christ.** This was his most egregious error—falsifying the nature of God. After the death of HWA, he did this to placate the new leadership of Joseph Tkach Sr. and Jr., who were in the process of introducing many false doctrines into the WCG. This error facilitated the Tkach’s efforts to replace the true teachings of the Scriptures and force the church to accept many Mainstream Protestant doctrines. This subsequently led to the total demise of the WCG. In a sermon that HLH titled “Unfinished Business” in July 1994, he falsely reasoned that in John 1:1 “the Word,” [Greek, *ho Logos*] did not refer directly to Jesus Christ and that “the Word” was not God, as the Greek text clearly says. Rather, he claimed that “the Word” was a divine thought in the mind of God the Father, who was the “Thinker,” and the one who became Jesus was in his thoughts. HLH’s reasoning was very twisted and completely incorrect. His major contention to arrive at such an completely erroneous conclusion was based on a total fabrication—a concocted lie! He claimed that the Greek word *theos* in the phrase, in John 1:1, “And the Word [*ho logos*] was God [*theos*],” did not mean that Jesus, “the Word,” was God before He came in the flesh. Rather, HLH claimed that the One who became Jesus was only a “divine thought” of the Father and He did not come into existence until the Father uttered His thought and Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. How did he arrive at such a conclusion? He did so by changing the meaning of the Greek word *theos*, God, to mean “divine.” However, the Greek word for “divine” is *theios*, not *theos*. In doing so HLH claimed that “the Word” was not “God” but a divine thought of God the Father. Thus, the divine thought of the Father became His utterance and Jesus was then brought into existence when He was conceived.

In the Greek New Testament, *ho theos*, **ο θεος**, is used 1311 times and is consistently translated into English as “God.” **Not once is it ever translated as “divine”!** Such an interpretation by HLH is a gross error—a fabricated lie. And as a scholar he must have known better than to recklessly change the inspired Word of God!

The Greek word for “divine” is *theios*, **θειος**, and is translated as “divine” in II Peter 1:3-4, and as “Godhead” in Acts 17:29.

Two other Greek words are also translated as “Godhead.” In Romans 1:20, the Greek word is *theiotes*, **θειοτης**; and in Col. 1:9 the Greek word *theotes*, **θεοτης** is used.

For those who are interested, I have a copy of Dr. Herman L. Hoeh’s original sermon which he gave in Fresno, California in July 1994, and we will send it to anyone who requests it.