

September 2010

Dear Brethren:

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

When Paul was preaching to the Corinthian church, he heard that there were some who were trying to lay another foundation than that which was laid. The Old Testament has a verse which complements this one:

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it . . . (Psalm 127:1).

Why would people strive to build a house leaving God behind them if they know God is the master builder of the house? The Lord's house is defined in 1 Timothy 3:15:

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

If the church is the pillar that holds the wall and the ground (where truth stands), when did God lie to the church? Anyone who believes that is so, is not part of the church (house) of God.

When I started thinking and praying about this thing and seeing the direction in which other splinter groups are heading since the foundation which God built was destroyed, I compared it to what happens when I build a cage for my pigeons to lay their eggs.

Now the Lord speaks of actually building the house (His church): "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

When I was building this cage, I took four stones and raised the cage up to sit on those stones. One day I removed one stone and left the other three to hold it. The next day I removed another one, thinking that if a cat jumped on it and tried to eat the pigeons, the cage would tilt and scare it away. After some days, we had a severe rain and windstorm. Having only two stones left to hold it, the wind had beaten the cage, it had fallen down, and four pigeons were dead.

This is also what happened in the parent body when two doctrines were changed and people started to build their own houses on their own foundations.

Did you notice the singular nature of the previous verses: the house, not *houses*, and the church or My Church, not *churches*?

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (Isaiah 28:16).

God laid a sure foundation in Zion and that was Jesus Christ. What have some laid? They laid themselves instead of Christ. They say they are responsible for the salvation of their members saying, "Do what I say and don't question."

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matthew 7:24–27).

We are to hear the sayings of Jesus Christ as He gave them in the Bible. There are many houses built by people today, and all of them carry the name "Church of God." But how can they be when they have cast Christ out of His Father's house? They became the foundation and built their own houses there. Notice that Jesus said the wise man built his house upon the rock. He did not say his *houses* upon the rock.

And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:17–22).

If you see what happened in the 1970s, you might think that members were not members of the church, but strangers in that house. They say they did not know what was being preached—strangers do not know what is in the house.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (2 Timothy 2:19).

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

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 9).

Doctrine was watered down, covenants were cast down, promises of God were in doubt. Men began to doubt who truly is the healer, God or doctors; who is the revealer of the truth, theologians or God, because what began to be laid down was not the original foundation.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . . " (1 Corinthians 14:33), [emphasis mine].

Confusion came in and people began to question themselves concerning the doctrine, "Did I believe the truth or was it something else?"

The number of foundations (organizations) laid down by men (or women), if listed here, could fill twelve pages. But to list all of the contradictory doctrines of these 450 groups would require a rather hefty book of more than five hundred pages. When men and women feel authorized to lay down their own new foundations, the Body of Christ continues to split evermore. Apparently, none of these "foundation layers" have even read Psalm 127:1, 1 Corinthians 3:11, or 1 Peter 4:17. If they have, they certainly have ignored them. Ignoring those verses is tantamount to raising their egocentric opinions to be above the word of God.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

Even many who claim they are in the church do not understand these chapters; they do not know that the judgment is upon the house of God now. They read it and throw it through the window, or cast it aside, or else they do not understand.

"Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:13) What about the 450 splinter groups? How do they view themselves by what Paul said here? All of them made up different doctrines so as not to look like others, but the Bible says a guinea fowl cannot cast its feathers and a leopard cannot change its spots.

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). Divide and conquer—it is Satan's plan. This is why many will continue to splinter each year. Due to what? Because Christ was cast outside. Men took over rulership from the Messiah. They became the doctrine-setters; they became the head of the church. They have robbed Christ of His right, taking control of His flock.

The plan put forth by Jesus Christ is just the opposite, for He called for unity: "And there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Israel did not know that God was their king, so they asked to be given a king like other nations around them. They refused to have one shepherd so that they could be one fold. They said, "We are capable of ruling ourselves like others." That is what happened in the church.

The Church of God is mentioned twelve times in all of the Holy Scriptures.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:1–6).

How many "ones" did you count in those few verses?

Paul admonished us to have only one faith. Having one faith means being of one mind as stated in Philippians 1:27, and 2:2. Having one mind requires that there be only one authority. Does not it stand to reason that by having only one faith everyone would be teaching and hearing the same truth, and therefore there could not be any other but the one Church which Jesus Christ founded? Also, by having only the one Church, would not the commands of Psalm 127:1, 1 Corinthians 3:11, and 1 Peter 4:17 be obeyed?

Paul continued in his letter to the Ephesians:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:11–14).

Was the body built in 1974, or did those who tried to lay their own foundations destroy it? What was the condition of the church after men brought their own words instead of the word of God?

Even in the Old Testament it was God's will that we all be one.

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all (Ezekiel 37:15–22).

There is only one God, one Father, one Jesus Christ, the Savior, one Shepherd, one Lord, one High Priest, one Holy Spirit to guide the one Church that Jesus Christ founded, which is the one Body of Christ. There is only one cornerstone and one foundation, and there is only one authority which was given to that one Church. There is only one Word, one Truth, one Scripture, one infallible interpretation of that one Scripture, one hope, one faith, and one baptism. We are to be of one mind, be one in spirit, and speak with one mouth in unity. We are all to say the same things, have one intent, are to have no dissensions between us, and are to render only one judgment.

How many "ones" did you count in that paragraph?

I sometimes wonder, what part of "one" is simply not understood by so many? "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

God did not plan for His church to be the way it is now, with men always coming up with ideas which they want the people to follow and to believe. Some now teach that Christ has come secretly, putting a mark on His people's forehead. Some say that the marriage supper of the Lamb will and must take place in heaven before the throne of

God—that the Son cannot marry far away from the presence of His Father. Was this the foundation which was laid down by Jesus Christ through His apostle? Is this not another foundation which is being laid down by those who have gone off the road? Just what is the nature of this deception?

Notice Jesus' specific warning: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4–5). Those who heard it did not take Christ's warning seriously. When Christ says many will come in His name, we need to understand this clearly. They will not say, "I am Christ, the son of God." They will say, "I have been sent by God to preach to you, to teach you the word of God. I am God's servant bringing hope to the lost world, bringing the word of salvation of your soul, and preparing people for the Second Coming of Christ."

What other foundation is being laid down by those who have gone off the road? Paul said that after his departure wolves would come in and would not spare the flock. Some would bring heresy. They did not spare the flock, as Paul said. Look at the way the flock is today; they are wandering in the wilderness as if there are no shepherds to lead them to greener pastures. So, what will we do? What did Mr. Cole do? After being put out of Worldwide Church of God, Mr. and Mrs. Cole were alone. They had been put out because they refused to depart from the truth. They were ones who feared the Lord. As the book of Malachi says, those who fear the Lord spoke one to another, meaning those who love the same thing are attracted to each other.

The remnant should cling tightly to the revealed truth of God, which cannot change. Truth is truth, and no matter what people will say, it will remain truth. We are not to lay another foundation; we are to be built on that which was laid by Jesus Christ through His apostle.

At present, you find people who were called of God but have turned against Him and do not want Him to reveal to them His word. They make up their own ideas and pass them down to the masses. The masses also do not ask God if what they are being told is true or not. Many who have joined other splinter groups think that what is being put in their minds is the truth which the church was given from the beginning. Mr. Armstrong put a picture in one issue of *The Good News* magazine of children in the classroom and a teacher with a funnel pouring his teaching inside the brain of a child. A child does not think about what is being poured in there; that is how people are today. They do not know where they are going because they do not know where they have come from.

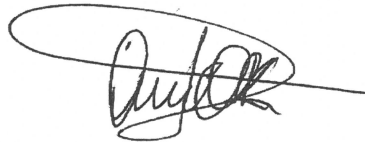
1 Corinthians 3:11 is a statement of confidence and victory. It is important that every Christian understand the implications of this verse. No matter what circumstances one may be facing, however stressful or discouraging they may seem, every child of God must remember that the foundation of our hope is God, and that foundation will never be destroyed.

Yes, the evils of the world sometimes affect brethren in various ways. Peter mentions those who have returned to living by the standards of the world rather than according to the word of God (1 Peter 2:18–22). Such behavior is certainly incompatible with living in God's house, but it is not going to bring the house down. The Lord knows which vessels are of honor and useful, and which are not.

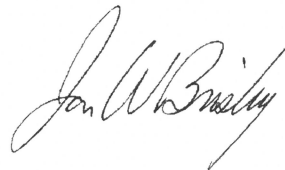
Timothy was also told, "Study [be diligent] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [handling accurately] the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). He could do that. So can we. In the midst of this life's most stressful events, we can live by faith, confident that "nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands."

Brethren, it is now, and not another time, that we must know where is the house of God. He who knows where he is going, must know from where he has come.

With much love and respect,
your brother and servant of the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Isaya Owak

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Jon W. Brisby