

An Explanation of the Primary Issues in the COGaic

Difficulties had been developing behind the scenes for the last several years; recent events brought everything to a head.

There are primarily three issues at the heart of the controversy: governance, our approach to the gospel, and the Church's teaching on the United States and Britain in Prophecy. Following is a summary of these issues:

1. *Governance*. The issue at hand is not the proper *form* of government in the Church. The issue revolves around *the proper way to exercise responsibility and authority within the community of the Church*, to declare the truth and to prepare God's people to rule with Christ. It's about *the way we work together* to get the job done, and *the way we care for those who are a part* of that effort. It's about how well we reflect the way God the Father and Christ work together and care for each other. On several occasions, Steve Andrews, Brian Orchard, Peter Nathan and Bob Rodzaj have approached Mr Hulme privately about matters of unethical conduct among the ministry. In addition, matters have been brought before the U.S. board. Finally, Steve Andrews wrote a letter appealing to Mr Hulme to consider these and other matters where members have suffered because we have not acted in accordance with the Scriptures. Our hope was that in the multitude of counsel from men who care deeply about God's people, Mr Hulme would at least consider that more action was required. However, these appeals have now been met with two dismissals. The fear is that Mr Hulme has withdrawn into an autocratic style of governance that no longer reflects a concern for the real welfare of God's people. God wants fruit (John 15:8). Our twofold commission demands that responsibility be exercised properly within our spiritual community to produce fruit in two areas: the declaration of the truth and the preparation of a people to rule with Christ. What causes problems in the Church is when people get polarized around personalities (1 Corinthians 1:10–15). When we do this, we forget that it's not about any of us. Paul understood that (1 Corinthians 3:1–17). It's about what *God* is doing; it's *His* building, *His* field, *His* work, not ours. Our collective work as a body of believers should be a collaborative effort of humble facilitators, working together within a hierarchical structure, to declare the truth to the world and to prepare God's people to rule with Christ, whose efforts respectfully support and help strengthen the direct connection God the Father and Christ have with those they have called and will establish with those they will call. We are concerned that over the passing of time, Mr Hulme has lost sight of this.

2. *Our approach to the gospel*. The issue at hand here revolves around *the content of the message* and *how it is conveyed*. This has been the subject of debate for several years, and has more recently come to the fore. Mr. Armstrong made clear the four essential criteria for effectively proclaiming the truth to the world: address a relevant topic, consider the current thinking regarding it, ask rhetorical questions to get people thinking about the real solution, and then give them the truth, clearly and courageously. Paul did this effectively in proclaiming the truth to the philosophers at Athens. Remarkably, to those who were intellectuals with no Hebraic background, he declared that there is a God, that He is Creator, Ruler and

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Lawgiver, that He wants a family relationship with us, that there is another way, and that things are going to change, and will be brought about by One that God Himself has charged with the task (Acts 17:22–31). Yet as time has passed in these 15 years since we came together again, our public proclamation has not effectively conveyed the truth of God to the world in a clear and courageous way. This too has been brought to Mr Hulme's attention, but we continue to produce materials that fall short in that way.

3. *The Church's teaching on the United States and Britain in Prophecy.* The issue at hand here is whether we believe what we once did regarding this pivotal, long-standing teaching of the Church. Though a study group has been convened, Mr Hulme's answer to one minister when he asked Mr Hulme whether he believed Ephraim was Britain was in essence "no." Others have heard Mr Hulme express similar ideas regarding this. Peter Nathan and Brian Orchard have appealed to Mr Hulme to consider his approach to the scriptures in this regard. Peter Nathan's objection to Mr Hulme's unilateral approach to introducing changes in doctrine was characterized in the official announcement of his resignation as a different view of government. The issue for Peter Nathan had nothing to do with the form of government in the Church, but how we collectively arrive at changes in our understanding. Sadly, the official announcement has only served to send members down the wrong path of wondering what our official teaching on the form of Church government is, and wondering what Peter Nathan believes is the correct form of government, when in reality the real issue is what Mr Hulme believes about the Church's teaching on the United States and Britain in Prophecy.

Steve Andrews, Peter Nathan, Cliff Veal and Bob Rodzaj have found that no agreement can be reached with Mr Hulme concerning these issues. If we cannot agree, it is very difficult to walk together (Amos 3:3). We must declare a message clearly and courageously. We must exercise governance properly according to God's Word, which includes dealing with unethical conduct in the ministry. A pivotal doctrine like the United States and Britain in Prophecy, which is so much a part of the content of the Church's message, cannot be easily diminished.

This is why we came to where we are. We want to please God, and we know that to do that we must do *all* of those things that please Him if we expect Him to bless the Work He has called us to participate in.