

Harold Camping Refuted: The Necessity of Membership in the Church (Institute)

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I. Introduction

Harold Camping, founder and head of Family Stations Inc. (otherwise known as "Family Radio") was known for many years as a Calvinistic radio Bible teacher. His fame rose to notoriety, however, when in 1992 he published a book entitled *1994?* in which he predicted that the world would end and Christ would come in September, 1994. Camping's prophecy, of course, proved to be false but he defended himself with the claim that he had never actually predicted the date with absolute certainty, but only that he believed on the basis of his calculations that the end was likely on that date. That was a subterfuge.¹

False prophets who remain stiff-necked are often given over to greater error, and such has proven to be the case with Mr. Camping. With some clever re-calculation, Camping then began to promote his thesis that 1994 *is* the correct date, not of the end of the world, but of the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which, according to Camping, is not characterized by a personal Antichrist and physical persecution of the true church, but universal apostasy, the reign of Satan in all churches in the world, and the end of "the Church Age." Since 1994, therefore, God has abandoned the instituted church and salvation is no longer possible in the churches and congregations of the world, because God has removed His Holy Spirit and given the task of world evangelisation (which for over 1950 years was entrusted to the church) to ministries like Family Radio. All this he has set forth in a book, *The End of the Church Age ... and After*, published in 2002, ten years after his failed prophecy in 1992.

With increasing boldness, Camping continues his attack on the instituted churches. In 2003 he published a book, *Wheat and Tares*, in which he claims that all those who remain in the churches and congregations in spite of Camping's "gospel" to depart out of the churches are tares (unbelievers) and that God is gathering the wheat (elect believers) for harvest through the call of Camping's "come-out-of-them" "gospel." In his latest book, *Time Has An End, A Biblical History of the World 11,103 BC - 2011 AD* (published in 2005) he predicts that Christ will return in 2011.² The rapture, he claims, will occur on 21 May, 2011, followed by 153 days of tribulation on earth for the unsaved, with the world ending on 21 October, 2011. Camping's false eschatology also includes his denial of eternal punishment (contrast Matt. 25:46; Rev. 14:10-11).

Why should we be interested in such an obvious fool as Harold Camping? Should we not dismiss him as completely irrelevant to the Reformed churches? Regrettably, we do not have that luxury. Harold Camping is a dangerous influence on church members all across the world. Although no statistics are available, many have forsaken instituted churches on his "authority."³ Therefore, we do well to warn the people of God against false prophets like Camping (Deut. 13:1-4; 18:20-22; Matt. 24:4) and to remind ourselves of our positive calling to be living, active members of true instituted churches; to seek out a true church if we are currently members of apostate or departing churches, or if we live in isolation from the true church, no matter what the cost.

II. Camping's Teachings

A. The Whole Bible is a Parable

Camping's problem is his hermeneutical approach. Although he claims that everything he teaches is from the Bible, he twists the Scriptures to his own destruction (II Peter 3:16). He complains that churches today trust in human doctrines and inveighs against the creeds and confessions of most churches. He has a Bible, a concordance and an overactive imagination. Camping follows the allegorical method. For him everything in Scripture is a picture of a deeper spiritual reality. Therefore he ignores the context and the meaning of words, grammar and syntax as the Spirit has given them.⁴ This has been Camping's method for many years. In 1986 he published his *First Principles of Bible Study*, in which he sets this forth. "While it [i.e., a text] may have only one level of meaning, it may also have as many as three," he writes.⁵ Camping sees the potential danger of this method but presses on regardless. He admits, "We all have within us the possibility of deception ... at times even the most careful teacher will be in error."⁶ He adds, "But isn't it dangerous to attempt to discover deeper spiritual meaning within the Bible? Won't this lead to all kinds of fanciful interpretations?"⁷ Indeed it will! Undeterred, Camping confidently allegorizes with reckless abandon. In the more recent *Wheat and Tares*, Camping exults in his discovery that the early church excelled in allegorical exegesis (by the early church, he especially means Origen). This to Camping is a confirmation that he has been right all along and he now laments that the Reformers, while rightly rejecting many of Rome's errors, threw out the excellent hermeneutical principles of men like Origen:

These very same principles of interpretation have been taught by Family Radio during the past several decades ...even though Family Radio was completely unaware of Origen's teachings.⁸

The conclusions adopted by the Reformers became the seeds of death for the church. Instead of realizing the Biblical correctness of Origen's position on Bible interpretation and carefully fine-tuning the Biblical rules to protect it, they threw away everything he taught and developed a Biblical hermeneutic that was completely unbiblical.⁹

Therefore, only men like Camping can really understand the Bible today. They have a special knowledge to which traditional expositors cannot attain. If a believing pastor merely studies the context, the words, the grammar (even with a knowledge of the original languages, which Camping does not have, despite the many references to Greek and Hebrew in his books¹⁰) he will never be able to arrive at the true meaning and preach the main idea of the text in his sermons. All pastors today have been handicapped in their seminary training so that they are unable to expound the word. Those hampered by the "historical-grammatical literal hermeneutic" have according to Camping "effectively locked the door to a correct understanding of many Scripture verses and then [thrown] away the key."¹¹ They are therefore "unable to understand anything the Bible teaches about the end of the church age ... they consistently complain that those who teach that the church age has ended are spiritualising. They are correct in their allegations because that is the way God wrote the Bible."¹²

Harold Camping behaves like a cult leader. Denying the ability of the church institute to preach the gospel, he tells his readers that this is the time in God's master plan for believers outside the churches to evangelise the world. Where are we to hear the Word, then? Camping informs his readers that they can hear the gospel from faithful ministries "such as" Family Radio, but we search in vain for the names of any other ministries apart from Family Radio. For example, he writes in *Wheat and Tares*, "As believers study their Bibles and receive help in their Bible studies from a source such as Family Radio, they become acquainted with God's master plan."¹³ The words "such as" are a subterfuge. There is no other source. Similarly, in another place he writes, "While we see the church world falling into decay all over the world, at the same time, we see ministries like Family Radio flourishing as they send the true Gospel all over the world."¹⁴ Again, the word "like" is a smokescreen. *No other ministry* is named or commended in any of Camping's books as a suitable source of gospel preaching.

In addition Camping rejects the perspicuity of Scripture: "Unfortunately, the concept of the perspicuity of Scripture, which is very commonly taught in our day, is completely contrary to the Bible."¹⁵ Of course, Camping must reject the perspicuity of Scripture, for none of his outlandish teachings concerning the "End of the Church

Age" are *clearly taught* in Scripture, nor can they by good and necessary consequence be derived therefrom (c.f. *Westminster Confession* 1:6).

To justify his hermeneutical approach Camping appeals to Mark 4:34: "But without a parable spake he not unto them," and pronounces with characteristic confidence that on the basis of this text, "*we can be certain that the whole Bible is presented to us with a great number of absolutely trustworthy historical facts, but until we find the Gospel meaning hidden within these historical facts, we have not begun to receive the rich spiritual blessings that are inherent in every part of the Bible.*"¹⁶ Mark 4:34 cannot bear the weight Camping wants to put on it. The text does not mean that all the Bible is a parable. It simply means that Jesus ordinarily taught the people with parables. Camping ignores the context and especially the second half of the verse: "and when they were alone *he expounded all things* to his disciples." Moreover, in John 16:29 the disciples exclaim, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb."

Allegorical exegesis is a serious error and Camping is a sad example of it run amok. James White points out the folly of Camping's method:

Allegorical interpretations have no more authority than the one proclaiming them ... There is not the first bit of rational connection between the passages Camping cites ... Harold Camping cannot demonstrate that his teachings carry the authority of the Bible, for as soon as he says, "this is a picture of this," he has left the inspired text behind and is now simply giving you the imaginations of his own heart.¹⁷

B. Camping's Obituary of the Church

Camping's teaching is this. God's program of salvation has been divided into three periods in the New Testament: the "early rain," the "spiritual famine" (or Great Tribulation) and the "latter rain." God was pleased to use the instituted churches and congregations to proclaim the gospel for most of the New Testament Age. In His patience He endured the sins of the churches and congregations, but just as His patience ended for the people of God in the Old Testament, when He destroyed both Israel and Judah in the captivities of Assyria and Babylon respectively, so the time has now come when God has destroyed (spiritually) the churches and congregations of our day. Since Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), Camping writes, "we can therefore expect a similar complete destruction of the corporate body again."¹⁸ This destruction is, however, not physical but spiritual. We can see the churches and the congregations in the world, but they are all apostate; they all teach false gospels; they are all synagogues of Satan, where Satan rules by means of human doctrines which are not based completely on Scripture. Duncan and Talbot point out that Camping is guilty of gross generalization concerning the state of the church today: "however critical we may be about the church ... Camping's assessment of the current situation is exaggerated and myopic."¹⁹

C. Camping's Acrophobia: The Fear of "High Places"

Acrophobia is the fear of heights. Scripture assures us that "height" cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:39) but Camping believes that "high places" have caused Christ to cast off His church.

In the Old Testament, Israel and Judah were frequently guilty of erecting high places to worship false gods. High places were places of worship apart from the temple in which the people worshipped idols. King Jeroboam set high places up as rival worship to the temple in Jerusalem (I Kings 13). In Judah, also, the people provoked God to anger with their high places (I Kings 14). The godly kings of Judah failed to remove the high places (Asa, I Kings 15; Jehoshaphat, I Kings 22; Joash, II Kings 14) with the exception of Hezekiah (II Kings 18) and Josiah (II Kings 23). Despite Josiah's reforms, it was too late, writes Camping, for Judah to be spared. Camping's thesis is that God destroyed the Old Testament church because of their idolatrous high places and that the New Testament church has been destroyed for the same reason.

This is a startling claim. In order to "prove" it, he jumps to II Corinthians 10 where he reads the words "every

high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (v. 5). In Camping's mind the word "high" in II Corinthians must mean the same as the word "high" in "high places." Camping then explains that New Testament high places are the confessions of the churches. The churches retain doctrines in their creeds which in Camping's view are not altogether faithful to the Bible. Therefore the churches stand condemned for erecting high places which are "doctrines solemnly adopted by churches ... high places in that they have come from the exalted minds of men."²⁰ God has been patient for over 1950 years. He has used the church to bring the gospel to the world despite her high places but the time has come for God to destroy the high places. He must do this because He did this in the Old Testament. God's dealings with His church are not uniform but Camping ignores this fact. He "finds" the prophecy that God will destroy the New Testament high places hidden in II Corinthians 10:6: "and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." The application is obvious, at least to Harold Camping:

In this very revealing passage God is declaring that punishment will come when the obedience of the churches will have been fulfilled; that is, when their work of sending the Gospel into the world has been finished.²¹

It means nothing of the kind. James White rightly exposes how ludicrous this interpretation is:

First no effort is made to explain how this passage refers to "high places." Does the mere repetition of the word "high" somehow indicate identity? ... To read into these words some future prophecy about the end of the church age is simply ridiculous on its face. Camping's "that is their work of sending the Gospel into the world has been finished" has no basis in the text, and Camping does not even attempt to provide a logical connection for his complete misreading of the words of Scripture.²²

There is *nothing in the context* to indicate that Camping's exegesis has any merit. The "obedience" referred to here is that of the Corinthians to whom Paul is writing. Paul writes in verse 2 that he does not want to have to be bold when he comes to Corinth. In light of the rebellion present in the congregation, he fears that he will have to be bold to deal with the situation there. He warns the Corinthians of the power that he possesses (vv. 4-5) and tells them that he is prepared to use this power ("spiritual and mighty weapons") against those who are sinning in the congregation at Corinth ("a readiness to revenge all disobedience") but that he is waiting for the Corinthians themselves to administer discipline ("your obedience"). If the Corinthians' obedience is fulfilled, Paul will have no need to come to Corinth in boldness wielding his spiritual weapons. When we consider the historical and grammatical context in the light of all Scripture sober exegesis is the result. Would that Camping could see that!

Camping's New Testament "high places" thus fall to the ground!

D. Satan is Ruling in the Churches

The Scriptures predict a fearful time in the future when Antichrist will rule until he is finally destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ. The Antichrist will be a man. He will set himself up as God to be worshipped as God, and aided and abetted by the false prophet and the false church (Babylon, the Whore of the Beast), he will seduce the whole world, except the true church, whom he will persecute. The saints will be ostracized, unable to buy or sell; they will be imprisoned and executed because of their refusal to worship the Antichrist or to have any part in his false religion.

Camping spiritualises all of this and announces to the world that Antichrist is here now. He is now ruling. He is now persecuting true believers. The reason we cannot see him is because *Antichrist is Satan*, and he is ruling by means of false gospels, through which he has made the churches and congregations spiritually desolate. Believers are being killed today, for "we can understand," writes Camping, "that to be killed is equivalent to being driven out of the churches."²³ He appeals to John 16:2 but this passage does not teach that to be driven out of the synagogues *is the same as* being killed. Christ's disciples are *both* driven out *and* killed. In Camping's mind "being driven out of the churches" is itself equivalent to being commanded to leave.²⁴ Believers today cannot

buy or sell either because, as Camping demonstrates by jumping around Scripture, the inability to buy or sell really means "no one can bring the Gospel there unless they have the mark of the beast."²⁵ In addition, the mark of the beast "consists of the unsaved within the churches" and worshipping that mark is the sin of revering doctrines invented by men.²⁶ To complete the explanation, Camping reveals to us that when the Beast (that is, Satan) calls down fire out of heaven in the last days (Rev. 13:13) this really means that he causes people to fall down backwards in the "slain the Spirit" phenomenon. The Charismatic movement is cited as proof positive that we are now in the Great Tribulation.

Thus, Camping outdoes the Dispensationalists by assuring us that there will be no personal Antichrist in the future, and lulls the church into a false sense of security. The church must know that her calling, especially in the last days, will be to suffer. She must be prepared for that. Camping's heresy is not only ecclesiological, but also eschatological. The Bride of Christ may not listen to him and be found asleep when persecution comes.

Camping appeals to Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, all of which record Christ's warning concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. In the Olivet discourse Christ warns of a day when the disciples will see the "abomination of desolation" in the holy place and that they then must flee from Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15). The most straightforward meaning of this text is this: Daniel the prophet prophesied an abomination which would make the temple in Jerusalem desolate. This occurred during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC) but had a secondary fulfilment in AD 70 when the temple was again defiled by idolatry. When, therefore, the disciples see a similar desecration of the temple in the future (this happened in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem) the urgent command is to flee in order to escape the inevitable bloodbath when Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20). All of this, of course, foreshadows the "great and final violation by the antichrist of all that is sacred."²⁷

Camping, unsurprisingly, does not opt for the straightforward meaning of the text. The abomination of desolation is Satan. The holy place is where the gospel is, that is the churches and congregations of the church age. Jerusalem, Judea, the Temple, all are pictures of the church from which the believer must flee:

The holy place is the temple, and the temple includes all of the churches and congregations throughout the world. In this study we have seen that he [i.e., Satan] is now ruling in congregations throughout the world, so the test of Matthew 24:15 is fulfilled without any question. Therefore, Christ has commanded that we must leave the church.²⁸

How can the temple be the church, and at the same time Judea and Jerusalem be the church? We are not told. Having seen Satan in the temple (that is, in the instituted church), and having left Judea and Jerusalem (that is, the instituted church), the disciples of Christ must flee to the mountains which means "flee to Christ or to God" (He is the mountain; Ps. 121:1). Camping may not arbitrarily make the word "mountain" refer to God. The meaning of mountain must be discovered from the context! To give one example, Jeremiah 3:23 teaches that salvation is hoped for in vain from the hills and the multitude of mountains. In the context of Matthew 24 mountain simply means mountain. Camping adds a few more pictures of the church to persuade his readers. In Luke 17:31 Christ commands, "he that shall be upon the housetop ... let him not come down." Camping assures us that "the housetop is identified with bringing the Gospel" and that the house is the church.²⁹ Therefore this text means "as judgment comes upon the church the true believer is to stay outside the church bringing the Gospel to the world."³⁰

This spiritual desolation of the churches and congregations is universal. Camping returns to the temple to prove this. Because Christ indicates that in the predicted destruction of the temple "not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Luke 21:5-6), Camping concludes that not one church will remain standing in the Great Tribulation. No believer may say that his church is exempt. No matter how faithful his church seems to be (even if the three marks of the true church are there) God has spoken: there will be no structure left. The church institute is destroyed: "God declares that there will not be left one stone upon another.

This means that God's usage of the churches and congregations has come to an end."³¹

Christ has cast off His Body and abandoned His Bride? He has ceased building His church. He has smashed His building to rubble? What blasphemy!

E. God Continues His Work Outside the Churches

Although God in His wrath has destroyed the church institute, the gospel must still be proclaimed. Camping acknowledges that God has been using the church to evangelise the world since Pentecost but now He will continue His saving plan outside of the churches. There is, of course, not a scrap of biblical evidence for this assertion but Camping assures his followers that this is indeed the case. God has prepared the way for Family Radio:

It was God's good pleasure to continue this method of reaching the world with Christ until God had securely put in place the ability of believers to reach whole continents for hours each day with the true Gospel.³²

Family Radio is the "loud voice" of Revelation 14:7:

Surely, as we are able to send the Gospel by radio and internet and satellite broadcasting so that it can be clearly heard in the homes of people all over the world it is going forth with a loud voice.³³

How convenient! As Duncan and Talbot put it, "The organizational church's demise does not daunt him—we've got radio, he says."³⁴ We are now in the "latter rain" period where God is saving a vast multitude of souls outside of the church institute. Camping finds proof for this in Revelation 8:1: "this half hour of silence *must be understood to be* the first part of the Great Tribulation during which heaven was not saving people by means of the Gospel going forth from the churches."³⁵ In addition, Paul in Acts 28 is allegedly a picture of true believers preaching the gospel to the elect during the "latter rain" period: "Christ is no longer using the churches ... He is still using believers, but these believers are no longer part of the corporate church."³⁶

This is absurd. Paul was an apostle, sent by the instituted church at Antioch to be a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2-3). He is not a picture of anything else except in Camping's fevered imagination.

F. *Intra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*

The church has traditionally confessed *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* or "outside the church is no salvation." Camping has turned that on its head and now proclaims that *inside the church* is no salvation! Those who, in spite of the clear (sic!) command to leave the churches, stubbornly refuse to depart are doomed. This is Camping's most controversial teaching. In *The End of the Church Age ... and After*, he is more cautious about the spiritual state of those who refuse to obey his (i.e., Camping's) call. He writes that if a person "persists in disobeying God's commands to depart out of the local church *it may be evidence* that he has the mark of the beast."³⁷ In *Wheat and Tares* he is unequivocal. Those who remain in the church *are* tares, and God is using the gospel (of Family Radio) to call the wheat out of the instituted congregations with the result that "the congregation will consist only of those who are servants of Satan."³⁸ True believers are the "angels" of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13 and by Camping's "gospel" God is "separating the wheat from the tares."³⁹ Camping speaks of the "super, super, terrible sin" of refusing to leave the church and warns that those who disobey are "still under Satan's authority."⁴⁰ This is scare-mongering at its worst.

Even worse is Camping's emotional blackmail directed towards parents. *You* may be saved, he says, but what about your children? If the Holy Spirit is not in the midst of the congregation, then the children will not be saved:

"That family has a serious problem that can only be remedied by leaving the congregation."⁴¹ Take your children out of church—all churches and every church!—remove them from the influence of solid catechetical instruction. This is Camping's call and in making it he offends Christ's little ones. Woe to him (Matt. 18:6)! And all of this is based on an allegorical and nonsensical interpretation of Lamentations 2:11-12 and Matthew 24:19!
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III. Camping Refuted

A. The Perpetuity of the Church

We have seen what Camping teaches and have noted the foundation of sinking-sand, namely allegory, on which he bases his absurd teachings. We have interacted with some of his more popular exegetical arguments, although it must be pointed out that Camping is, as James White puts it, a "moving target" who is always claiming to find new information in the Bible.⁴³ White complains,

It is impossible to produce a published work that can keep up with the ever changing and developing "insights" of someone who honestly seems to believe that he is "seeing" things in Scripture that no-one has ever seen before.⁴⁴

What Camping refuses to see is that the Bible teaches the perpetuity of the church. Christ has promised that He shall build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). God will be glorified "throughout all ages" (including ages after 1994!) by Jesus Christ *in the church* (Eph. 3:21). The church (not Family Radio!) is "the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). Christ promised that the church would not fall away, but that His Spirit would guide her into all truth (John 16:13). He has been faithful to this promise.

Camping is aware of these verses but he insists that they refer only to the "eternal invisible church." This is a grievous error. Christ's promise to preserve His body and bride (the company of the predestinated and gathered) involves the preservation of instituted churches on earth that have the marks of the true church and which manifest themselves as His body and bride in particular locations. Camping declares, "only the eternal invisible church is the bride of Christ. When [Christ] speaks of the church as His body, He can be speaking only of the eternal invisible church."⁴⁵ That this is erroneous can easily be demonstrated. Paul writes to the Corinthian believers, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27). He does not say, "ye are part of the body of Christ," but he designates the church at Corinth the body of Christ as that body manifests itself in that city. In another epistle to the same church Paul writes, "I have espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). The church at Corinth is the bride of Christ as she manifests herself in that location.

Is it not the case, though, that Christ removes the candlestick from some churches so that they are no longer manifestations of His body and bride on earth (Rev. 2-3)? This is correct. Some institutes apostatize over time and lose their status as true churches. This does not mean, however, that all churches are able to apostatize simultaneously so that there is no true church in the world. White writes,

The destructibility of a single, local congregation, or even a group of them, does not imply the destructibility of the entirety of the local congregations that make up the visible church of Jesus Christ on earth.⁴⁶

Is it possible for individual congregations to fail? Assuredly, writes Turretin but,

... rather the question is whether the catholic church, which is the universality of believers scattered over the whole world, can ever fail. Or whether it could have happened formerly or can take place hereafter, that the church can fail altogether and

there be none on earth who rightly worship God. This we deny. For if particular churches fail, it does not follow that the church itself totally fails, for it remains always in its true members dispersed over the world ... Neither can it be admitted absolutely and simply that each and every particular church can fail at the same time on earth, but only successively and in different times.⁴⁷

R. B. Kuiper also attests to the church's indestructibility:

Christ Jesus, the glorious and omnipotent Head of the church, at the right hand of God, guarantees its continuity ... the church which [the apostles] organized has never passed out of existence and never will. The divine Head of the church has promised that. To be sure, it has experienced many upheavals, but no upheaval has destroyed it.⁴⁸

But, replies Camping, God says that He has given to Satan to make war with the saints and to overcome them (Rev. 13:7). We repudiate this idea. God gives the *beast* (Rev. 13:1), not Satan to make war (that is, to persecute) the saints. Satan can never overcome the church. Turretin explains:

But it can neither be overcome by Satan, because he was overcome and triumphed over by Christ (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14), so that neither by sifting can he cause our faith to fail (Lk. 22:32), nor obtain that all his arts and efforts should prevail against the church.⁴⁹

The Reformed creeds (which Camping contemptuously calls "high places") witness to the perpetuity of the church. The *Belgic Confession* calls the church (institute) "a holy congregation of believers" and declares,

This church has been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this that Christ is an eternal King, which without subjects He cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God against the rage of the whole world; though it sometimes for a while appears very small (Article 27).

The *Westminster Confession* is another witness:

Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, *to the end of the world*: and doth, by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto (25:3).

The *Second Helvetic Confession* proclaims,

But because God from the beginning would have men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4), it is altogether necessary that there always should have been, and should be now, and to the end of the world, a church (chapter 17).

Surely if any could have been tempted to believe that the church had perished it was those who had lived through the gloomy days of the Middle Ages. While Rome dominated the ecclesiastical landscape and persecuted those who desired to be faithful to the Scriptures the Reformed continued to believe that Christ would build His church and the gates of hell would never prevail against her. Even the Waldenses, who were brutally persecuted by Rome, confessed this: "this church can not fail, nor be annihilated, but must endure forever" (*Waldenses' Confession* 26).⁵⁰

We must believe likewise and see to it that we are members of churches that Christ in His mercy has built and preserved in the world.

B. The Indefectibility of the Church

Camping believes that all church institutes on the face of the earth have lost the truth. He is determined to overturn I Timothy 3:15 which states that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Camping writes, "under no circumstances can the church be the pillar and ground of the truth."⁵¹ Camping's position is grammatically untenable. The words translated "pillar" and "ground" stand in apposition to the word translated "church." This is clear from the Greek cases used in the text. "Church" (not God) and "pillar" are both in the nominative case and therefore stand in apposition to one another. The conclusion is unmistakable. The *church*, not God, is the pillar and ground of the truth. Furthermore, the church *institute* is the pillar and ground of the truth. This is clear because Paul is giving instructions to Timothy on how he is to *behave himself* in the church. Just as God committed His oracles to the Old Testament church (Rom. 3:2), so He has committed the truth to the New Testament church (I Tim. 3:15). The church's (not Family Radio's) task, indeed her privilege, is to uphold truth in a world of lies.

Although individual churches can lose the truth by apostasy, there can never be lacking a church which confesses the truth on earth. Kuiper writes,

In one sense the church of Christ is not infallible. Most assuredly it can err. It has erred grievously in the past. It errs exceedingly grievously today. But in another sense it is infallible. It will never lose the truth. The truth will never perish from the church. As there always has been a body of believers upholding the truth of God, so there always will be. The church of the past was, the church of the present is, the church of the future will be – the pillar and ground of the truth. In that respect, too, the Christian church is indeed glorious.⁵²

C. The Perpetuity of the Sacraments

According to Camping, all churches must disband and become unorganised fellowships without office-bearers, discipline or sacraments. Believers ought to gather together and fellowship together by listening to Family Radio. Did Christ not command believers to observe the Lord's Supper until He comes (I Cor. 11:26)? Camping thinks he has an answer to this. He finds the solution in the Old Testament. Although God commanded that the ordinances in the temple be observed continually, there came a time when "God Himself interrupted the temple service by totally destroying Jerusalem."⁵³ Camping sees a parallel. God has brought judgment upon the churches so they can no longer observe the New Testament "ceremonial laws" of baptism and the Lord's Supper. He calls them "ceremonial laws" because he claims that the churches made high places out of these ordinances by calling them sacraments.⁵⁴

Camping has no basis for calling the sacraments "ceremonial laws." Nor has he any ground for his parallel. Baptism was instituted by Christ and He has commanded that it be administered until the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-20). Camping overlooks an important point in Matthew 28. Preaching *and baptism* will both continue to the end. Camping wants to keep preaching (although he is not ordained to preach and Family Radio has no authority to preach) but abolish baptism. This cannot be.

The conclusion is obvious. The true church institute will be preaching and administering the two sacraments until the end of the world. That activity did not end in 1994.

D. The Perpetuity of Office-bearers

Christ exercises authority in His church through office-bearers: pastors, elders and deacons, men lawfully called and qualified to serve in the institute.

Nevertheless, Camping tells his readers to withdraw their church membership. If the church threatens to exercise the keys of church discipline, Camping tells them not to worry: "the church no longer has any divine authority."⁵⁵ But the church which Christ is building and against which the gates of hell will not prevail is the church to which the keys have been given (Matt. 16:18-19). These are the keys of preaching and discipline, as

the *Heidelberg Catechism* teaches in Lord's Day 31.

If a whole congregation wants to follow Camping, his advice to them is to disband. Become a fellowship of believers: "The elders will no longer be elders. The deacons will no longer be deacons. The pastor will no longer be pastor. In other words, no individuals will have spiritual rule over the congregation."⁵⁶ Thus Camping encourages mutiny or "blatantly seeks to remove the sheep from the sheepfold under the nose of the shepherds."⁵⁷

God's will for His church is that it be governed by office-bearers. This was the apostolic practice. They "ordained elders in every city" (Acts 14:23). Titus receives the command to "set in order the things which are wanting and ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5). This situation is to continue in the church: "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach also" (II Tim. 2:2).

Ultimately, office-bearers are gifts of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ. Paul teaches this in Ephesians 4. The sign that Christ has ascended is His bestowing gifts on the church, for he ascended "and gave gifts to men" (v. 8). What he gave is specified in verse 11: office-bearers. Pastors or teachers (the other extraordinary offices of apostle, prophets and evangelists were temporary) have been given to the church "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (v. 12) "till we all come to in the unity of the faith" (4:13). Therefore this gift is permanent. The church will need, and Christ will graciously provide, godly pastors and teachers (and indeed, elders and deacons) until the end. He did not withdraw that gift in 1994.

The Bible has nothing to say to those who leave true instituted churches to form unorganised fellowships except this: set in order the things which are wanting and ordain elders (Titus 1:5)! Repent and join the church! Followers of Harold Camping are, in the words of van Bruggen, "a small herd of disobedient sheep" who have been deceived by a wolf in sheep's clothing.⁵⁸

IV. The Necessity of Church Membership

A. The Testimony of Scripture

Many Christians today rightly deride the nonsensical theories of Harold Camping and would vehemently deny that the church institute is dead. Yet, these same people live as practical Campingites, in that they do not seek membership in a true church institute.

The Scriptures assume that a person upon being converted will join the church, for the Bible does not speak to Christians except as members of the church. So it was in the very beginning of the New Testament era: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). White remarks, "it was to this organized, recognizable, identifiable body of believers that the Lord added daily those who were being saved."⁵⁹ This needs emphasis. Camping is not the only one to disparage the church institute. Many evangelicals, and even Reformed believers, claim that membership in the institute is not necessary because they are part of the body of Christ and can worship God at home by reading their Bibles, listening to tapes or watching services on the internet. Nevertheless, being part of the church institute *is* necessary because the saints have need of one another. The church institute is the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27) and the members of that body exist in co-dependence. One member (of the church institute) may not say to another "I have no need of thee" (I Cor. 12:21). Nor may members exist aloof outside of the body as if they have no need of any of the other members.

The church is important, not because all those who are not members of the institute are unavoidably on the way to hell (no Reformed theologian has ever maintained that position) but because God has given to the church alone the means of salvation, the means of grace through which He gives salvation to His elect people and their elect seed. God has given the preaching of the Gospel to the church, not to Harold Camping. The founder of Family Radio was not sent by Jesus Christ. He has no authority to preach. Not even Paul himself who was personally commissioned by Jesus Christ dared to preach without being sent by an instituted church (Acts 13:1-

3). A man may not preach unless he is sent (Rom. 10:14-15). Christ gives preachers to the church and the church sends them to preach (Eph. 4:11). The church supervises their preaching. All true preachers are accountable to an instituted church. Harold Camping is a law unto himself and is doing untold damage to the church for which one day he must give account to the Head of the church, Jesus Christ.

Without preaching there is ordinarily no salvation because "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). Young pastor Timothy is enjoined to preach because in so doing he shall *save* his hearers and himself (I Tim. 4:16). Preaching is vital for spiritual health. Without true preaching the believer becomes weak and is tossed about by every wind of doctrine because he is not under the protection of the pastors and teachers whom Christ has given to His church (Eph. 4:14) and who watch for his soul (Heb. 13:17).

The sacraments also may only be administered by men lawfully ordained by the church. Without church membership a man cannot be baptized and he cannot receive the Lord's Supper which God has given to strengthen our faith. One who willfully refuses to become a member of a true church spurns the gifts which God has given to the church for his edification and salvation. Such a "disobedient sheep" is "outside the sheepfold and ... obliged to join it."⁶⁰

B. The Testimony of the Creeds

Our Reformed fathers have recognized the necessity of church membership and this conviction has been recorded in the creeds.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* addresses the subject of the church in Lord's Day 21. In Q. & A. 55, we read concerning the communion of the saints that "each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and welfare of other members." One does not need to be a member of the church only for one's own good. This is important. One must also pursue membership in order to benefit the other members. Communion of saints involves loving the saints. White is right when he exclaims, "This cannot be done in isolation: it assumes we will know whom the 'brethren' are that we are to love! And this again points us to the importance of membership in the local church."⁶¹ Cornelius Plantinga agrees: "We are trying to do a grotesque and sinful thing when we live alone or hold aloof. We are depriving others of the edification and support they need."⁶² De Jong expresses the issue this way:

To be a Christian means to have fellowship with the living Christ and in the same moment with his people. To break this fellowship lightly, on the basis of personal prejudices and insights, is to imperil our salvation.⁶³

The *Belgic Confession* is most insistent on this point. In Article 28 the creed lays down an absolute rule. *All believers* are duty bound to separate themselves from false churches and join the true church institute "wheresoever God has established it." The *Belgic Confession* does not brook any argument. No matter what earthly circumstances prevent him from joining the church the believer must exercise all possible diligence to obey this command. The creed adds "even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it, yea, though they should suffer death or any other corporal punishment." If that is the case, how much more applicable is this command if one's spouse, children, siblings, parents, and friends are against it!

The threat of princes' edicts and corporal punishment are not empty words. In the Netherlands when the *Belgic Confession* was written (1561) believers were risking all when they left the false church (in that context, Rome) and joined the Reformed churches. Guido de Bres, the author of the *Belgic Confession*, was himself martyred. If believers in the sixteenth century were willing to risk their lives to join a Reformed church what ought be said of the many professing believers today who are not willing to undergo any inconvenience to join a true church? How few today are willing to offend family members and friends by leaving an apostate or apostatising denomination when relatively little is at stake?

The *Westminster Confession* expresses the necessity of church membership when it says that outside of the church is "no ordinary possibility of salvation" (25:2).

The *French Confession* (1559) is very similar to the *Belgic Confession* on this point:

We believe that no one ought to seclude himself and be contented to be alone; but that all jointly should keep and maintain the union of the Church, and submit to the public teaching, and to the yoke of Jesus Christ (Article 26).⁶⁴

The *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) likewise impresses upon us the importance of the church institute:

But we esteem fellowship with the true Church of Christ so highly that we deny that those can live before God who do not stand in fellowship with the true Church of God, but separate themselves from it. For as there was no salvation outside Noah's ark when the world perished in the flood; so we believe that there is no certain salvation outside Christ, who offers himself to be enjoyed by the elect in the Church; and hence we teach that those who wish to live ought not to be separated from the true Church of Christ (Chapter 17).

Those creeds which say that outside the church is no salvation do not intend to consign all but church members to hell. Rather we ought to understand it this way, without minimizing the seriousness of the call to church membership:

God has ordained that salvation is made available for mankind not in the bush or on the beach, nor in the flock of the hireling (John 10:12); salvation is available where Christ is, where His voice is heard ... If I no longer hear and heed God's Word and Law today, I also deprive my children and grandchildren of hearing God's Word. Withdrawal from the church is not a decision for the self only, but it has implications for future generations.⁶⁵

We see, then, that this modern notion, that Christians may live outside the church, is not shared by the Reformed fathers, many of whom sealed their testimony in their own blood.

C. The Testimony of Calvin

In his *Institutes* Calvin argues strenuously for the necessity of the church institute and inveighs against those who despise her. God has given the church out of His infinite love and mercy. He knows our weaknesses. He understands how feeble our faith is. Therefore He provides means to work faith in us and to strengthen our faith. Calvin likens the church institute to a mother at whose breasts the child of God sucks the pure milk of the word, or to a school where we must always be learning of Christ and His great salvation. "Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives."⁶⁶ "God desires [His people] to grow up to manhood solely under the education of the church."⁶⁷ Calvin warns, "it is always disastrous to leave the church"⁶⁸ and criticizes those who in proud contempt of the means God has provided abandon the church:

Many are led either by pride, dislike or rivalry to the conviction that they can profit enough from private reading and meditation; hence they despise public assemblies and deem preaching superfluous. But, since they do their utmost to sever or break the sacred bond of unity, no one escapes the just penalty of this unholy separation without bewitching himself with pestilent errors and foulest delusions.⁶⁹

Harold Camping must take note. He has surely been bewitched with foul delusions. But he is not the only one. Many there are today who will not take pains to seek out and join a true church.

Calvin was involved in a controversy his whole ministry with a group of Protestants in France who called themselves Nicodemites. These Protestants remained in false churches and sought to justify their actions by saying that in their hearts they believed the Reformed Faith but it was too dangerous for them to worship in a truly Reformed manner. For them the risks were high. Protestants in France suffered horrendous cruelty at the hands of the Roman Catholic authorities. As much sympathy as Calvin had for their plight, he remained insistent that these Christians may not participate in false worship and that their calling was to join a true church. He addressed them in these words: "My advice would be to leave [France] if [they] could."⁷⁰ "Whoever has no means of being in the Christian church where God is worshipped purely let him at least groan night and day."⁷¹ "Let them seek every means that are offered them, showing that it was not hypocrisy on their part to ask for deliverance."⁷²

The response of many Nicodemites was scorn: Calvin thinks that the road to heaven runs through Geneva! He wants us to "go running to Geneva to get an earful of sermons."⁷³ Calvin responded by pointing out the Nicodemites' hypocrisy. They claimed that they highly esteemed the Reformed faith, yet they were not willing to inconvenience themselves to enjoy the means of grace. They would not hesitate to move for other reasons: "There are none who would not boldly permit themselves to leave their country in order not to die of hunger ... if they were offered six times as many goods in a foreign country, they would have no great problem leaving to take possession."⁷⁴

The situation has not changed. There are Reformed Christians living in isolated areas of the world today where there is no true church. Some of them complain about the spiritual wilderness in which they live. Few of them would hesitate to move to a different city if that involved career advancement with a higher salary. But how few today would consider relocating in order to enjoy the inestimable blessing of church membership! Calvin sums it up this way:

Everyone would like to be carried on a litter to worship God ... and for lands and possessions, goods and business connections and all other assets to follow right along. Now if they act this way, how highly do they esteem Jesus Christ?⁷⁵

D. Membership in an Apostatising Church Is No Alternative

Church membership is necessary. We have proved this, despite the ravings of Harold Camping. However, not membership in every church is acceptable to God. Reformed Christians who, because there is nothing better in the area, worship in or are even members of liberal Protestant churches, Arminian churches, Pentecostal churches or any other ecclesiastical bodies which do not bear the marks of a true church, are not walking in obedience to Jesus Christ. Nor are Christians who are mere visitors or regular attendees of true churches but have not become and have no intention of becoming members.

Concerning the latter, the *Belgic Confession* impresses upon them their duty of "submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline [of the church]" and "bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ" (Article 28). Mere attendees and well-wishers cannot do this. Scripture tells us that we must place ourselves under the supervision of office-bearers (Heb. 13:17). Elders have no authority over those who are mere attendees. Such attendees cannot partake of the sacraments and they are not subject to church discipline. Christ commands every believer to partake of the sacraments and to obey those men through whom He is pleased to rule His church.

Concerning the former it must be said that membership in an apostatising church makes the true worship of God impossible and makes one corporately responsible for the sins of that church or denomination. In a day of individualism, few understand that biblical principle, unlike the framers of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. They knew that, if the elders knowingly allow an ungodly person to come to the Lord's Table, "the covenant of God is profaned and His wrath provoked *against the whole congregation*" (Lord's Day 30, Q. & A. 82). The whole congregation, not just the ungodly person, come under the wrath of God. That is how God deals with His people. When Achan stole from the spoils of Jericho, God killed thirty six men, and when Joshua enquired of the Lord, God said, "Israel hath sinned ... they [plural] have transgressed" (Josh. 7:11). Achan stole. Nobody in Israel

knew about Achan's sin, but God held the whole nation responsible.

Such people need also to think about the welfare of their children and grandchildren. An adult Reformed believer may have the discernment to filter out the false doctrine from the sermons he hears in a departing church but his children do not. At best they will be confused; at worst spiritually poisoned by the false doctrine from the pulpit and the corrupting influence of the departing church. Such a Reformed believer needs to do more than bemoan the state of the denomination. He needs to initiate ecclesiastical protest through the correct channels. When he has done this and if his protests have been unsuccessful, then he needs to leave and take his children with him. Remaining indefinitely in a departing or apostate church is not an option for one who loves the truth of Christ.

V. Conclusion

Those who have followed Harold Camping out of the church institute have been seduced out of the sheepfold by a "thief and a robber" (John 10:1). Because Mr. Camping quotes so many passages from the Bible and seems to write with such authority, he has a certain appeal. Nevertheless, stringing passages together which have no logical connection is not faithful Bible exposition but a mockery of the Scriptures.

Family Radio can never replace the church. Camping reduces the function of the church to world evangelisation and he insists that the church is not able to fulfil the Great Commission.⁷⁶ But remember that the Great Commission includes the command to baptize those who believe (Matt. 28:19). Camping has neither the authority to preach nor to baptize. God has given no other means for the gathering of the elect than the preaching of the gospel by men called by Christ through His church. Camping ran but the Lord did not send him (Jer. 23:21).

The church is where the voice of Christ is heard through the preaching (John 10:27). Outside the church there are only the voices of strangers, the hissing of serpents and the growling of wolves. Camping's voice hisses on Family Radio: come out of the churches. We must resist his call. He would have us dwell in a wilderness where there is only spiritual death and where we and our children are deprived of the sincere milk of the word (I Peter 2:2). We dare not follow where he leads.

What will Camping say when he must give account to the Head and Husband of the church? How will he, who has been guilty of seducing Christ's bride, of causing Christ's little ones to stumble and of trying to demolish Christ's temple, answer Christ on that day? We tremble at the thought and we urgently call him to repentance.

What a blessing it is to enjoy lively membership in a true church. Christ is there. There we enjoy fellowship with the Triune God in covenant friendship as He speaks to us in the preaching and strengthens us through the sacraments. There we experience the gracious protection of His rod and His staff as He rules us through the office-bearers. How foolish, then, to throw away all of those blessings and to endanger our salvation by leaving her.

Appendix

The following are some examples of the wildly speculative exegesis of Harold Camping. All the references are from *The End of the Church Age ... and After*. Beware of such a "Bible teacher." Notice his many assertions, none of which he proves from the context or from the language of the text itself.

(1) The star in Revelation 9:1-3 is the Lord Jesus Christ (pp. 8, 86). (2) The three and a half years of famine in the days of Elijah typify the three and half years of Christ's earthly ministry (p. 22). (3) Isaiah 5 "is speaking about the kingdom of God as it was represented by the local congregations throughout the church age" (pp. 24, 29). (4) "*We may safely equate* the stinking fruit of the church age with the high places of Old Testament Israel" (p. 29). (5) "*We know that* the two witnesses (of Rev. 11) represent the true believers who are driven out of the churches or in obedience to God's command come out of the churches" (pp. 32-33). (6) "The beast and the false prophet are pictures of Satan as he ruled in the churches during the Great Tribulation" (p. 41). (7) "The rider

on the black horse (Rev. 6) is a warning to the churches that if they do not remain faithful God will begin to take the Gospel away from them" (p. 42). (8) In Revelation 12:7-11, "Michael is the Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 56). (9) "The wood, hay and stubble (of I Cor. 3:12) *must relate to the church members who are still unsaved*" (p. 64). (10) The beast from the sea is Satan because "in the Bible the sea frequently represents hell" (p. 89).⁷⁷ (11) "The image of Satan (Rev. 13:15) consists of the unsaved within the churches" (p. 97). (12) The merchant in the parable of the pearl (Matt. 13:45-46) "*can only be Christ*. The pearl is the kingdom of God. Christ sold all that He had, that is, He emptied himself of His glory and became the suffering servant in order to obtain the kingdom of God" (p. 100). (13) The woman in Proverbs 31 is a "picture of the believers as we buy without money the Gospel and sell it to others who buy from us without money" (p. 101). (14) The corn and wine after which the children pine in Lamentations 2:11-12 are "words pointing to the Gospel" (p. 108). (15) "When a Gospel is preached all over the world that emphasizes grace and grace alone, the land, the kingdom of God, will enjoy its Sabbaths (Lev. 26:33-35). It will enjoy a totally works-free gospel" (p. 145) (16) "Causing someone to fall backward is equivalent to calling down fire from heaven" (p. 181). (17) "The application (of Jeremiah 7:16) is that God is commanding us not even to pray for the churches" (p. 197). (18) "This prophecy (of Ezekiel 9:5-7) *can relate only to the judgment on the churches during the Great Tribulation*" (p. 197). (19) "The abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15-16) is Satan" (p. 210). (20) "The housetop (Luke 12:3) is identified with bringing the Gospel ... the house identifies with the church" (p. 229). (21) "Paul (in Acts 28) is a picture of all who have been cast out of the churches and congregations. In this chapter, as in chapters 22-27 of the book of Acts, the churches and congregations are typified by the Jews who do not want to hear the whole counsel of God" (p. 231). (22) "This half hour (Rev. 8:1) *must be understood to be the first part of the Great Tribulation during which heaven is not saving people by means of the Gospel going forth from the churches*" (p. 249). (23) "The seven women mentioned (in Isaiah 4:1) identify with the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 ... In Isaiah 4:1, they are presented as those who take hold of a man, that is they want the Son of man, Christ, to be their Savior and King. But they don't want Him to be their spiritual bread, and they don't want to be clothed with His robe of righteousness. They want their own bread and their own clothing, that is, they want the name of Christ; they want to identify with Christ, but they want their own salvation program. In other words, they want to be the final authority as to truth. They do not want to be that concerned about the truth of the Bible ... however, verse 2 of Isaiah 4 reveals that in that day, the day when this sorrowful condition exists in the churches, the branch of the Lord (Christ) shall be beautiful and the fruit of the earth (those who are becoming saved) will be excellent. They are the ones who are being saved because there were those who have escaped from the church or congregation and continued to bring the true Gospel outside of the church" (p. 257). (24) "The keys (Matt. 16:19) *can only be the Bible*" (p. 273). (25) "A *careful study* of this chapter (Eze. 28) *would show that*⁷⁸ Tyre is representing the churches as they send the Gospel into the world" (p. 286). (26) In Revelation 12 "the woman is the Old Testament believers represented by Mary, who gave birth to Jesus. They are clothed with the sun, that is they are clothed with Christ who is their robe of righteousness. The moon is under her feet. The moon represents the law of God. The believers have become victorious over the law in the sense that the law of God can no longer condemn them. The crown of stars signifies that the believers reign with Christ" (p. 290). (27) When the dragon drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth (Rev. 12:3-4) "this third part represents all who are believers" (p. 290). (28) "When Jesus entered Jerusalem just before He was crucified, He sat on a pair of donkeys. Spiritually, *it can be shown that*⁷⁹ these donkeys represent unsaved people he came to save" (p. 298). (29) The merchants of the earth (Rev. 18:11) represent believers in the churches who were bringing the Gospel but may no longer do so during the Great Tribulation (p. 311).

¹Camping wrote, "The results of this study teach that the month of September of the year 1994 is to be the time of the end of history ... it seems extremely unlikely that we have overlooked something. However, I modestly and humbly acknowledge that such a possibility exists ... I will be surprised if we reach October 1, 1994 ... when September 6, 1994, arrives, no one else can be saved. The end has come" (*1994?* [New York: Vantage Press Inc., 1992], pp. 532-533).

²Tremper Longman III notes that Camping actually calculated the return of Christ to be 2011 in his original book, *1994?* but he decided that God had also revealed that the Great Tribulation would be shortened for the elects' sake (by 23 years) which caused him to arrive at 1994. Longman notes wryly, "He has the book all set up to claim that he only made a simple error in assuming that the tribulation would be shortened by 23 years. He has intimated that the end might take place in 2011. My advice to those of us who spent good money on *1994?* is to pass when *2011?* hits the bookstores" ("1994: The Year of Christ's Return?" *New Horizons* [December, 1993]).

³*Christianity Today*, vol. 46 (21 May, 2002) reported that "ministers are reporting defections as members heed Camping's call." One

pastor "related a 10-percent decrease in membership" (p. 21).

⁴For a sample list of the wild allegories which Camping offers his readers, see the Appendix.

⁵Harold Camping, *First Principles of Bible Study* (Oakland, CA: Family Stations, Inc., 1986), p. 2.

⁶Camping, *First*, pp. 23-24.

⁷Camping, *First*, p. 53.

⁸Harold Camping, *Wheat and Tares* (Oakland, CA: Family Stations, Inc., 2003), pp. 51-52.

⁹Camping, *Wheat*, p. 57.

¹⁰Stephen Meyers interviewed Camping in June 1994 and he reports, "Harold Camping has had no formal training in the Bible. He does not know Greek or Hebrew. He uses a concordance to find out the original language. If he does have a question about the Greek or Hebrew he goes to Dr. Ortero, who he says has a Ph.D. in Greek and Hebrew. Dr. Ortero has a Ph.D. in Psychology from Argentina. Camping admits that Dr. Ortero does not agree with him about the world ending in September 1994. Camping thinks that if Dr. Ortero really studied his math in-depth that he would then agree with his book that the world will end in September 1994. In fact, if everyone did their homework, Camping believes everyone would agree with him ("Other Views: Harold Camping," *Institute for Biblical and Scientific Studies*; www.bibleandscience.com/otherviews/camping.htm).

¹¹Camping, *Wheat*, p. 63.

¹²Camping, *Wheat*, p. 68.

¹³Camping, *Wheat*, p. 88.

¹⁴Harold Camping, *The End of the Church Age ... and After* (Oakland, CA: Family Stations, Inc., 2002), p. 252.

¹⁵Camping, *Wheat*, p. 59.

¹⁶Camping, *Wheat*, p. 54; italics mine.

¹⁷James R. White, *Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping Refuted and Christ's Church Defended* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 2002), pp. 56, 82, 137.

¹⁸Camping, *The End*, p. 12.

¹⁹J. Ligon Duncan and Mark R. Talbot, *Should We Leave Our Churches?: A Biblical Response to Harold Camping* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), p. 18.

²⁰Camping, *The End*, p. 79.

²¹Camping, *The End*, p. 80.

²²White, *Dangerous*, pp. 73-74.

²³Camping, *The End*, p. 31.

²⁴Camping, *The End*, pp. 32-33.

²⁵Camping, *The End*, p. 101.

²⁶Camping, *The End*, pp. 97-98.

²⁷William Hendrickson, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, repr. 1973), p. 857.

²⁸Camping, *The End*, p. 211.

²⁹Camping, *The End*, p. 229.

³⁰Camping, *The End*, p. 229.

³¹Camping, *The End*, p. 217.

³²Camping, *The End*, p. 62.

³³Camping, *The End*, p. 150.

³⁴Duncan and Talbot, *Should We Leave*, p. 20.

³⁵Camping, *The End*, pp. 248-249; italics mine.

³⁶Camping, *The End*, p. 233.

³⁷Camping, *The End*, p. 195; italics mine.

³⁸Camping, *Wheat*, p. 35.

³⁹Camping, *Wheat*, p. 42.

⁴⁰Camping, *Wheat*, pp. 112, 34.

⁴¹Camping, *The End*, p. 108.

⁴²Camping, *The End*, p. 108.

⁴³White, *Dangerous*, p. 39.

⁴⁴White, *Dangerous*, p. 17.

⁴⁵Camping, *The End*, p. 283.

⁴⁶White, *Dangerous*, p. 68.

⁴⁷Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 3 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994), pp. 41, 46.

⁴⁸R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 49, 71.

- ⁴⁹Turretin, *Institutes*, vol. 3, p. 45.
- ⁵⁰Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, repr. 1983), p. 765.
- ⁵¹Camping, *The End*, p. 268.
- ⁵²Kuiper, *The Glorious Body*, pp. 77-78.
- ⁵³Camping, *The End*, p. 236.
- ⁵⁴Camping, *The End*, pp. 236-237.
- ⁵⁵Camping, *The End*, p. 260.
- ⁵⁶Camping, *The End*, p. 260.
- ⁵⁷White, *Dangerous*, p. 92.
- ⁵⁸J. van Bruggen, *The Church Says Amen: An Exposition of the Belgic Confession* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada: Inheritance Publications, 2003), p. 151.
- ⁵⁹White, *Dangerous*, p. 30.
- ⁶⁰Van Bruggen, *The Church Says Amen*, p. 153.
- ⁶¹White, *Dangerous*, p. 31.
- ⁶²Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *A Place to Stand: A Study of Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Board of Publications of the CRC, 1981), p. 106.
- ⁶³Peter Y. De Jong, *The Church's Witness to the World*, vol. 2 (Pella, IA: Pella Publishing Inc., 1962), p. 242.
- ⁶⁴Schaff, *Creeds*, vol. 3, pp. 374-375.
- ⁶⁵C. Bouwman, *Notes on the Belgic Confession* (Western Australia: The League of Free Reformed Women's Bible Study Societies in Australia and Pro Ecclesia Publishers: Kelmescott, 1997), pp. 114-115.
- ⁶⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (USA & GB: The Westminster Press and S. C. M. Press, 1960), 4.1.4; p. 1016.
- ⁶⁷Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.5; p. 1017.
- ⁶⁸Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.4; p. 1016.
- ⁶⁹Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.5; p. 1018.
- ⁷⁰John Calvin, *Come Out From Among Them: Anti-Nicodemite Writings of John Calvin* (Dallas, TX: Protestant Heritage Press, 2001), p. 94.
- ⁷¹Calvin, *Come Out*, pp. 192-193.
- ⁷²Calvin, *Come Out*, p. 95.
- ⁷³Calvin, *Come Out*, p. 181.
- ⁷⁴Calvin, *Come Out*, p. 202. For more on Calvin versus the Nicodemites, see Martyn McGeown, "[Come Out From Among Them.](#)"
- ⁷⁵Calvin, *Come Out*, pp. 215-216.
- ⁷⁶Camping writes, "We must realistically admit the churches of today cannot by any means fulfil Christ's command" (*The End*, p. 262).
- ⁷⁷Where does sea represent hell in Scripture? We are not told.
- ⁷⁸The only authority there is for this statement is what James White refers to repeatedly in his book: *Solus Campingus*, the ideas of Harold Camping himself (*Dangerous*, p. 84).
- ⁷⁹Camping makes no efforts to show how this can be true. One can only assume that, if the reader has swallowed the nonsense in the book to this point, he will have little difficulty believing this on Camping's "authority."