

# **The One True Church Doctrine**

## ***And The Unity of the Faith***



## Preface

About 3 years ago, I had a discussion with an individual who had been ordained as a minister in RCG. This individual left RCG when the doctrines of this organization changed and he became a member and has since been ordained in one of the larger offshoots of the *Worldwide Church of God*. During the phone conversation, he made a statement regarding the truth that shocked me. He said that the one true Church doctrine was something RCG invented and that this doctrine was never taught in the *Worldwide Church of God*.

I have also noticed from reading some of the material that is posted on some of the websites of some of major splinters of the *Worldwide Church of God* that some of them now believe that it is perfectly normal and acceptable for the Church to be scattered into various groups, all adhering to various versions of the truth. This new unbiblical teaching originates from the top leadership positions in these groups and is not in line with the Biblical truth that was restored by Jesus Christ to the Church of God in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the Philadelphia era, an era that Christ confirmed kept his word, Revelation 3:8 and 10.

In addition, I have had phone conversations and email exchanges with numerous individuals with a Church of God background who believe that it is perfectly acceptable to leave the Church of God after an apostasy and remain on your own. These individuals believe that one's relationship with God is solely between them and God and that an organized Church is no longer necessary. While the right action to take during an apostasy is to leave the Church, and while it may also be necessary to remain on your own for a particular period of time, God's people should only remain in on their own until Jesus Christ begins to gather his people again under a faithful minister.

Jesus Christ is a gatherer and not a scatterer, Matt. 12:30. When Christ begins to gather His people after an apostasy has occurred, he will always gather them in the truth, the doctrines that He has established in the Church, which are the doctrines that came from God the Father. There is only one doctrinal truth that comes from God and this is also known as the "faith" of beliefs that the one true Church adheres to. Mr. Herbert Armstrong, who led the Philadelphia era of the truth, often referred to these teachings as the "original truths". And it is these truths that created the "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13) in the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Jesus Christ through His human instrument Mr. Armstrong.

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# Chapter 1

## The One True Church Doctrine

### Introduction

This article was written because there is prevalent belief that it is perfectly normal for the Church that Jesus Christ started in 31 A.D. to be disunited and separated into many different groups. Many of the *Worldwide Church of God* offshoots now teach that it is normal for the Church to be scattered into different groups.

This document was also written because an attitude has gripped the thinking of the scattered flock who have experienced an apostasy and who now believe it is acceptable to have a relationship directly with God without the need of being a member of the spiritual organism that is the one true Church of God that is united in truth.

I have found that those who believe that it is perfectly normal for the Church that Jesus Christ started to be composed of several different groups with varying versions of the truth often cite one or two quotes from Mr. Armstrong and these excerpts are often cited out of context. I have found that “Loner Christians” who believe that it is perfectly acceptable to remain on your own without the need for the spiritual body of Christ, which is the one true Church, also cite one or two quotes that Mr. Armstrong made and their excerpts are also cited out of context.

And so, this document was written to restore the “original truth” that a loving God restored to the 6<sup>th</sup> era. This article will contain the “original truth” on the subject of the one truth Church and the unity of the faith, a doctrinal truth that was restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church of God. Numerous excerpts from Mr. Armstrong and from the material that was produced in *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Mr. Armstrong will be cited. And this material will be as thorough as possible and will cover all the scriptures on this subject so that everyone can prove for themselves that these were the teachings that were restored by Jesus Christ to the Philadelphia era of the Church, Revelation 3:8 and 10.

“You know, when they heard Jesus speaking, they sort of, must have backed up with awe, and they were afraid to take Him. And now the Pharisees said, ‘Well has this deceiver deceived you too?’ Now they claimed He was a deceiver. **I speak the same words He did and preach the same gospel.** You better judge for yourselves. Remember, my friends, they thought Jesus was a deceiver, and they said He was. But the one who is not suspected of being a deceiver, he usually is.

**“I say checkup on all men. Checkup on your own preacher. Checkup on me. And how do you do it? Do like the Bereans did with the apostle Paul. They didn't know if he was a deceiver, but they listened without prejudice.** Now they didn't listen to Paul with a lot of prejudice. They didn't listen jeering and say, ‘Well that's a deceiver. I won't believe a thing he says.’ They listened readily, and with readiness of mind without any prejudice. They said, ‘Well now, we'll listen. We'll weigh what he says.’ **Then they went and ‘Searched the scriptures whether these things be so.’** And you know, when they searched the scriptures. They found that it was so.”

### The One True Church Doctrine

A key doctrine that was restored by Jesus Christ to the Philadelphia era of the Church is the teaching that there is only one true Church, and that Jesus Christ is the head of only one Church. The term one true Church is synonymous with the Body of Christ. It is a Biblical truth that is found in the following scriptures, Matt. 16:18, Psalm 133:1, I Cor. 1:10, and I Cor. 12:12-13.

The one true Church doctrine is a teaching that Mr. Armstrong expounded upon, over and over again, when Jesus Christ used him as the human instrument to raise up and lead the Philadelphia era of the Church. Of course, it is understood that Jesus Christ is the true Head and Leader of His Church:

**"Notice especially, there is only the ONE CHURCH. Not MANY churches. The CHURCH is not divided. There is only one Church. Not a parent church and many little daughter churches that have split off in disagreement. Divisions splintering off are NOT STILL IN THE CHURCH.** It is the CHURCH that is to marry Christ in the resurrection at his coming-not disagreeing churches-not groups who have broken off! Not a parent church and apostate daughters. That will become more obvious as we continue."

Book, *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W Armstrong, 1985

"Now Jesus, the human Jesus, came to a physical temple, built out of stone, and there was some wood, and some gold, and some other fine stones in it. But when Christ comes the second time, he is coming in great spiritual power. And he is coming to a spiritual temple. And that spiritual temple is the Church. And the Church grows into that spiritual temple in the Lord, 'In whom, you also, are built together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.' **In other words, God comes and dwells in each of us, but he also dwells in the Church. Now, he doesn't dwell in two or three Churches. I'm going to show you, when we get back here to first Corinthians 12, there is only one Church...**

**"Now we begin to notice that there's only one Church.** 'The body is one and has many members. And all the members of that one body, being many, are one body. So also is Christ.' There's only the one Christ. There are not several Christs. **There are not several Churches that are Christ's own body, and that are God's Church.** 'For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body,' **Not two Churches, not five Churches, not 70 churches, not 150 different Churches.**"

Bible Study, "I Corinthians 12", Herbert W Armstrong, September 5, 1980

**"Now you read about the Church. It is one Church, not two churches, not five churches, not hundreds of churches, one Church, one body of Christ but many members, many members, but the one Church.** And that one Church infused with and led by the one spirit, the holy spirit of God, yet many members. Your human body is one body, but many members."

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "Hebrews Part 6", Herbert W Armstrong

“Brethren, I think there is one thing I think we need to be very especially concerned about, now we are at the very end time. **There's only a very short time now before the Great Tribulation**, and it's going to be a greater time of trouble than you've probably even imagined.

“Are you really a Christian? Are you really a member of the Church? **You know it's by one Spirit we are all baptized into the one body, the Church. And it's not many bodies, scattered, all believing something different. There is only one Church — that is one Church of God.**”

Sermon, “Are You Really A Christian”, Herbert W Armstrong, July 9, 1983

“[I Corinthians 1:13] Now he says, ‘is Christ divided?’ **Christ is not divided. There is only one Church. And that one Church must all speak the same thing. Why? That there be no division. That Church can't be divided...**

**“The only way we can speak the same thing is if we speak what Christ put in the Church through an apostle. That's the way he did it to start.** Has Christ changed or is he doing it any differently today? If he's doing it still today, if Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, then **the only way the Church today can speak the same thing is to speak what Christ put in the Church through His chosen apostle. Now if I'm not that chose apostle, you go find the one who is and follow what he says.** I invite you to do that. So you see, there is only the one way we can all speak the same thing.

“Now they tried having a doctrinal committee and one man in the doctrinal committee saw it this way and another saw it another way. And they were all divided. Finally, I just abolished the whole thing and set the doctrine, which Christ gave me. **And that's the official doctrine of the Church today.**”

Bible Study, “I Corinthians 1 & 2”, Herbert W Armstrong, July 18, 1980

### **All Truth Originates from God the Father**

It is important to understand where the one true Church doctrine originates from. All Biblical truth originates from God the Father. He is caring God and the author of all truth including this vital Biblical teaching that He gave for the welfare of the Church. It is also critical to understand that the one true Church doctrine did not originate with Mr. Herbert W Armstrong although we will see later that he was used as a human instrument to restore this key doctrine to the 6<sup>th</sup> era:

“Do you see that men do not preach what the Bible says? But men who have written these things and have even have tried to pollute and to malign and to change and pervert the very Bible itself, the way they have even written titles and subtitles and things of that sort in it. **And here Jesus said that my teaching or my doctrine is not mine but His that sent me, and the Father sent Him. There again, it's the revelation of God who sent Him, gave Him, and He's preached what His Father said.**”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “The Feast of Tabernacles Part 2”, Herbert W Armstrong

“Look, **we must all speak the same thing. That's what God tells us, and what He commands,** I Corinthians first chapter. But **it must be the same thing that Christ speaks,** and He's the Word. **Everything He speaks, He got from God the Father, and there's perfect agreement.** I'm not the head

of this Church, Christ is. I don't rule this Church. Jesus Christ is the ruler. If you don't like the government in this Church, you go tell God about it, because He made Christ the Head of the Church, not me. I just want to serve Him, and I hope that's the way you do too."

Sermon, "Are You Ready", Herbert W Armstrong, October 15, 1980

"Take a look at John chapter 12. The apostle John faithfully recording Christ's Words where it says in John 12, and verse 49, and you could find several scriptures where Christ says this very same thing, very similar to it. He says 'For I have not spoken of myself' the words that he brought and He spoke were not His own words. **Christ did not claim authorship for the words that He delivered 'For I have not spoken of myself but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak.'**

"Now you know most of us would be reluctant to say something like that. We don't want to say that we speak what we are told to speak. **But Jesus Christ faithfully said that His words were not His own. He spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak.** And He says, 'I know that His commandment is everlasting, whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.' **Christ never claimed authorship for His words. He also said the words were from His Father who is greater than He.**"

Sermonette, "Back on Track", Bob Fahey, December 12, 1981

### **The Apostles Receive the Truth from Jesus Christ**

As we have seen, all truth comes from the God the Father and Christ only speaks the truth that the Father directs Him to speak, John 12:49. And so, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Christ taught the apostles the truth that the Father gave Him, John 17:6-8. And this is the same truth that Christ taught the apostle Paul in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and Mr. Herbert W Armstrong in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mr. Armstrong often referred to this truth as the "original truth" because he understood that it was the same truth the 1<sup>st</sup> century apostles had been taught:

"Take a look at John chapter 17. John chapter 17, you'll remember that this was the last night. This is the prayer that Christ prayed to the Father before He was crucified. It's a very moving prayer, and it's got a lot of knowledge, a lot of spiritual knowledge and understanding for us. Notice in John 17 and verse 6, he says, 'I have manifested your name unto the men which you gave me out of the world. Yours they were and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.'

"Notice again, he does not claim authorship. He says they have kept the word of God the Father, they kept God's word. **Now 'they have know that all things whatsoever you have given me are of you.'** **The apostles, or they were disciples at this time, recognized that the words that Christ gave them were not Christ's words. They knew that He was sent from the Father with a message, they understood that.**

"And He says now 'they have known that all things whatsoever you have given me are from you, and I have given unto them the words which you gave me.' **The word was given to Christ, He was sent to the earth with a message. And He gave it to the apostles, 'I have given them the words which you**



**gave me and they have received them.** They recognized them for what they were 'and have known surely I came out from you, and they have believed that you did send me.'"

Sermonette, "Back on Track", Bob Fahey, December 12, 1981

"You have heard what it means to get back on the track. It's the Word that came from God through Christ. He spoke only the words God gave Him. **The apostles spoke only the words that Christ gave them. Jesus Christ is the Word of God in person. I have here the Word of God, the same Word of God exactly, in writing. It's no different, it's the same Word of God that taught the original apostles, no difference whatsoever, same Word of God. So God taught His apostle of this day and age through the same Word that He taught the original apostles, precisely.**"

Sermon, "Back on Track", Herbert W Armstrong, December 12, 1981

"Brethren, think a moment. HOW did the first Church of God receive its doctrines — its teachings — its beliefs? Answer: **Only through the APOSTLES. And how did they receive this teaching? Direct from JESUS in person.** He is the WORD of God. The Bible is the SAME Word of God in writing! How did YOU receive the true teachings of Christ? From God's apostle. **How did I receive this wonderful truth? From the SAME JESUS, only IN WRITING.** The Bible is a coded book. The Catholics and Protestants have access to it, but can't UNDERSTAND IT!"

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, January 26, 1983

### **The Church Receives the Truth from the Apostles**

An important Biblical teaching is that the Church of God receives the truth from the apostles. This is how the truth can be authenticated by a begotten member of the body of Christ and how one can know whether a Biblical truth came from God the Father.

Remember, all truth originates from God the Father. Jesus Christ in turn teaches these truths to His apostles and the apostles teach the truth to the Church of God. This hierarchical method of receiving the truth is intended to prevent doctrinal confusion and it is designed to create doctrinal harmony in the Church:

"So the Church then, is to help keep all of us in line, that we all speak the same thing. It must be the same thing that Christ speaks. We must have the mind of Christ. And the ministry must know what is the mind of Christ. Now, how did they know in the early Church? They knew by what the apostles taught them. Where did the apostles get it? The original twelve all were taught by Jesus in person.

"How did Paul get it? Paul went to the Gentiles. Paul said he had seen Christ. Christ had talked to him in person. Paul spent three years down in Arabia, with Christ right after he was converted, before he went off to preach a thing. Then Paul went to Jerusalem to see if what he had been taught by Christ, was exactly what the other apostles said Christ had taught them. **And he found that it was exactly the same truth.** They all got it from Christ.

**"Where did the Church get the truth? They got it through the apostles.** The apostles got it from Christ. Now, you people in the Church, you don't get the truth direct from Christ. You're not to get it direct out of the Bible. But you should do like the Bereans did. They heard it, and they searched, and they were more noble than those of Thessalonica because the people of Thessalonica didn't do that, but the people of Berea, they listened with an open mind. Now they did check up on the minister. They did check up on the apostle. They searched the scriptures. And when they saw it with their own eyes, they believed it. But they searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

Bible Study, "II Corinthians 11", Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980

**"All doctrines in the Church as it began, A.D. 31, were put in by IN apostles. All doctrines in the present Philadelphia era were put into the Church by Jesus Christ through His chosen apostle.**

**"Now WHY does Christ use such caution in putting HIS doctrines into God's Church through His apostle?**

"LET ME MAKE THAT POINT CLEAR!

**"When Christ chose His apostle for this time, he chose one who, 1) does believe what God says, 2) will not compromise or water down truths and doctrines Christ has given , and 3), has an OPEN MIND to receive further truth from Christ, and to be willing to acknowledge error when PROVED and turn from it! I do TREMBLE at the Word of God! I LOVE it, and I FEAR to go contrary to it or to mislead you, my brethren and my children in the Lord!"**

*The Worldwide News*, "And Now Christ Sets Church Back On Track Doctrinally!", Herbert W Armstrong, February 19, 1979

**"Notice brethren, it's always called the word of God. It comes from the Father and it was sent by Christ. Christ was sent into the world to bring the words of God. And He gave them to the apostles and the apostles were to faithfully pass them on to the membership and the ministry, all of them. And they would carry them on faithfully.**

**"Now when you have it straight down the line and you get God's mind on any subject, on any subject there is, and it comes from the Father and it was given to Christ and it was faithfully passed on to the apostles. And the apostles faithfully pass it on in the word, which we are reading now, which is called the word of God, which we are reading now, so representing Christ's message that it's the word of God to and we are faithfully in line with that, and it comes from the apostles, down to the ministry and the membership and it's straight, and there are no changes and dilutions, you're on track...**

"Whether it's a matter like tithing, which again, shows God's mind very clearly in the scriptures that he wants us each to tithe, or something that's not covered directly, like calling a minister by his first name, but a principle based on God's law. **When we have God's mind on a subject passed down, from God, to Christ, to the apostles, and our age, apostle, and on down to the ministry and membership, then we're faithfully on track and we're going the way God wants us to go.** They'll be two results of that, that we now enjoy far more in the Church of God than we did when we were off the track.

“And the one result is peace. Where no one’s arguing and bickering for his own point of view and he wants to have God’s point of view on every subject and he wants to know what God’s mind is. It cuts out all the arguments, all the fights and the bickering.

**“And the second result is that we’ll all speak the same thing, exactly God’s word as it comes down from Him, right through Christ, the apostles, the ministry and the membership.** And I tell you, that is a pleasant thing that can be, because you see, God knows the way of peace.”

Sermonette, “Back on Track”, Bob Fahey, December 12, 1981

### **The Philadelphia Era of the Church Received the Truth from a Faithful Apostle**

The Philadelphia era of the Church received all of its doctrines through one apostle, Mr. Herbert W Armstrong. Christ used him to raise up the 6<sup>th</sup> era of the Church and to restore the truth that Christ received from God the Father. Mr. Armstrong did not compromise with the truths that were entrusted to him by Jesus Christ but he served as a faithful apostle and he passed them down to the Church as he received them from Christ. It should be noted that Jesus Christ confirms, in Revelation 3:8-10 that the Philadelphia era of the Church received and faithfully kept these truths during the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

“At age 34, God had me disturbingly CHALLENGED as I had never been before about keeping GOD'S SABBATH. I was forced into the most intensive and in-depth night-and-day study and research of my life. I then believed just the OPPOSITE of what GOD SAYS in His Word. I was trying to prove I was right—to HAVE MY OWN WAY. In that first beginning six months' deep study of the Bible, I learned I had believed the very opposite of WHAT GOD SAYS.

“In that period God OPENED MY UNDERSTANDING to most of the MAJOR BASICS OF GOD'S TRUTH THAT THE CHURCHES AND RELIGIONS OF THIS WORLD HAD LOST — indeed, even the flickering remnant of the TRUE Church had lost!

“He opened my mind to HIS LAW. Not only the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath, but the annual festivals and Holy Days. I learned the truth about God's GOVERNMENT having been established on earth under the archangel Lucifer, and the origin of Satan and PURPOSE of God in restoring God's Government over the earth. I learned Jesus was born to be a KING, which traditional "Christianity" seems not to know. I learned our identity as being of the lost tribes of Israel, and the difference between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. **This gave me the KEY to understanding PROPHECIES! God revealed to me the symbols and truths of the book of Revelation as revealed through Matthew 24 and Daniel.** I learned the Kingdom of God will be ON EARTH.

**“NO MAN taught me these truths. As the original apostles were taught by Jesus IN PERSON, so was I taught by Jesus Christ IN WRITING. It is the SAME WORD—the SAME TEACHING.”**

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, March 19, 1981

**“I came among the Church first in 1926-1927 and by that time they had lost most of the original truth, but somehow God opened my mind to begin to understand a lot more than they had seen. I didn't understand it all then, but I understood a great deal that they didn't. They knew. They didn't**

know what the gospel of the Kingdom was. They knew there would be a thousand year reign with Christ, but they didn't know what would happen. **But God began to reveal more and more to me and to restore the truth to His Church in this Philadelphia era.**

"I came in the very tail end of the Sardis era of the Church. It was the true Church of God, but they had lost so much of the original knowledge and truth. They had the true name, they had the law. They had the Sabbath. They had the identifying sign. But they didn't have the true gospel. They didn't know our identity as Israel and God revealed that to me. **So many things that God revealed to me that first year, a lot He didn't reveal until later.** I didn't know then that we can be born as very God into the God Family."

Sermon, "Accreditation", Herbert W Armstrong, April 1982

"Revelation 3:8 'Thou hast but a little strength, and hast kept my word'. Brethren, often I have said this, that I have known scores of men with better minds than I have, not only more scholarly, because they have gone on with that, but more aptitude to be scholarly, with better personality, with more of everything that could be used. And God did not call one of them. **Now why did He call me?**

"... Revelation 3:8 'I know' He knows our works. So there are works and they're good works, and not rituals. 'Behold' He set this open door. 'You have but a little strength, **and hast kept my word**'. **I was going to say, if there is any one reason why God called me, it is because I was willing to believe what He said, and because I had kept His Word, and I have not compromised.**"

Sermon, "Warning to the Church", Herbert W Armstrong, July 1, 1978

"Now I'd like to give you one little prophecy in the New Testament (in Revelation 3 and verses 7 and 8). **This is the Philadelphia Church, and it is speaking of our Church today, Verses 7 and 8.** Revelation 3:7 'And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write' ...

"Revelation 3:8 'I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, no man can shut it you have but little strength and hast kept my word'. **Has believed what He says and kept His Word, and has not watered it down and has not compromised.** And when I found it watered down, brethren, we got back onto the track. We're almost back there, if not entirely and we must get all the way back."

Sermon, "Microwave from Tucson", Herbert W Armstrong, March 2, 1981

### **The Duty of All Faithful Ministers in the Church Hold Fast the Truths Received from an Apostle**

It is the duty and responsibility of all ordained ministers of the true Church of God to hold fast to the truths that were restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through the apostles. This instruction is found in I Corinthians 4:1-2, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

True ministers, of any rank, are first and foremost, the stewards, the men who guard, keep, protect and hold fast to the “mysteries of God”, which are the truths that were revealed to the Church of God by Jesus Christ through the apostles. And moreover, it is a duty that is required of all ministers in order to serve in the office of a true minister of God. This instruction is reiterated in Titus 1:7-9, “For a bishop [an elder] must be blameless as the steward of God... Holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught.”

“Fellow ministers, I say to you by Christ's authority that for one claiming to be a minister of Jesus Christ and receiving a salary as a minister of, and representative of this Church, **to water down or make less binding the teachings and doctrines Jesus Christ put in this Church through me is taking money (salary) under false pretenses. It is SERIOUS and a SERIOUS SIN. God will call everyone who does that to account.**

“Compare this to a captain in the army. He is in a comparatively low authority, but he is over first and second lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, etc. Suppose an army captain begins to water down or change the military rules. Suppose he tells those under him, ‘You don't need to obey this or that order — unless you want to.’ Such a captain would be court-martialed and PUT OUT with DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE!

“I know that the large majority of you ministers are faithful in preaching the doctrines the living Christ has put into His Church through me. Yet under my son's assuming more authority than had been given him, **there was a great letdown and dereliction of duty creeping in through a portion of the ministry. In the army, during wartime, for such dereliction of duty they might just rid the guilty officer by a firing squad. HOW MUCH MORE SERIOUS IS WATERING DOWN OF DOCTRINES AND THE FAITH IN GOD'S WORK?**

“It is far more important than being a captain in the army in time of WAR! If you did not agree with the military regulations and orders and openly proclaimed your dissidence to those under you, you would be court-martialed and probably shot! **Yet disagreement and contrary teaching of those under you in GOD'S CHURCH is, in God's eyes, FAR MORE SERIOUS!**

**“Now I am not, of course, going to order any firing squads. But the LEAST you can do, if you cannot wholeheartedly accept and loyally teach the truths Jesus Christ put into His Church through His chosen apostle, is to resign and LEAVE THE CHURCH!**

“God commands in His Word that we all ‘SPEAK THE SAME THING.’ That ‘same thing’ He put into His Church through His apostle. **If you can't agree on any point, you may bring your disagreement privately to your superior or directly to me — but to teach disagreement to the children of GOD is the height of disloyalty!**”

*The Worldwide News*, "Watering Down – Or Building Solidly Up?", Herbert W Armstrong, June 11, 1979

"Notice in Second Timothy, chapter three. Second Timothy, chapter three, and verse 14. Here's Paul who was trained personally by Christ as well. And Christ, you know, he is so much identified with the Word of God, and it so fills him that he's called the Word of God. God permits that name to be on him because he's, he's so much like it. He is exactly the word of God.

"He says, in Second Timothy, chapter three, and verse 14, the apostle Paul, trained personally by Christ as well, 'But continue you in the things which you have learned and have been assured of.' Timothy was a young minister and he was told to keep going in the same direction, 'knowing of whom you have learned them.' **Knowing that the apostle Paul had taught him, and he had a direct connection with Christ, who had taught him the words from the Father. And that Christ had faithfully delivered the Father's words,** 'knowing of whom you have learned them. And that from a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.'

"Timothy knew the words of God from the Old Testament, of course, from a child. But did he understand them? No, not until an apostle came and explained it to him, and showed him what those words were, and helped him to put them together, here a little, and there a little, to understand the words of God.

**"Notice brethren, it's always called the word of God. It comes from the Father and it was sent by Christ. Christ was sent into the world to bring the words of God. And He gave them to the apostles and the apostles were to faithfully pass them on to the membership and the ministry, all of them. And they would carry them on faithfully."**

Sermonette, "Back on Track", Bob Fahey, December 12, 1981

### **The Unity of the Faith**

The binding element of the Church of God is the truth. The truths that come from God the Father are what makes the Church of God the One True Church and what keeps it together as one undivided and united Church. Mr. Armstrong expounded on this subject in one of the Bible Study's he gave on Ephesians. It is extremely helpful to listen to the entire sermon to understand the full and complete meaning of this vital point. This is also referred to quite often as the "Faith" or the "Unity of the Faith":

"'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers', now you see, he's talking about a Church and it is an organized Church, it's an organized Church, and some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry", and that's getting the gospel to the world, 'for the building up the body of Christ', that's feeding the flock, **'until we all attain to the unity of the faith.'** **Now not only unity together, but unity in the faith.** But if I'm in one place, and you're a thousand miles away, and with no contact one way or the other, we're not as likely to get

together as we are if we are together, and we all are studying the same word, wanting only the truth...

“Well we had to all be willing to admit we were wrong. And as long as we were, we used to come to exact harmony together. ‘For the building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith.’ Well now, in those meetings we used to have, we would discuss it until we did all come to the unity and we could all see the same truth, and it was unity, but it had to be the truth. If we were looking for our own way we never would have found it. ‘And of the knowledge of the Son of God’, to mature manhood, instead of childhood and, to the measure, now we get back to measure once again, ‘of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.’ ...

“‘Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together.’ This is what I wanted to come to, joined and knit together, of, ‘every joint with which it is supplied.’ I want to read that in the King James, ‘From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies.’ Compacted, it's like they're welded together, every piece, they're not scattered one here and one there. And it is not with one idea here, and a different doctrine and idea there. We've all got to come in the unity of the faith of the truth of God, and that means that each and every one of us must be willing to give up his way.”

Bible Study, “Ephesians 3-4”, Herbert W Armstrong, January 2, 1981

“Let's note carefully the meaningful words Jude used [Jude 3]. He was urging them to defend the original faith they had been given. Many of these people had been converted by the preaching of Christ's apostles. Some may have even heard Christ Himself. They got the truth firsthand - directly from the apostles who had obtained it from Christ who had faithfully delivered it from God the Father. There was no question about what the faith was. It had been faithfully given to them!

“This faith, meaning in this sense the body of beliefs and practices handed down by the apostles, forms the essence of the meaning of God's Church. Together with the prophets, the apostolic teachings form the foundation of God's house – Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Any superstructure not built upon this foundation is false; it will not stand (I Cor. 3:10-15).

“So, then, the faith which must be earnestly held on to and defended is that original set of beliefs handed down by Christ's apostles. Paul's writings are full of warnings of false teachers who sought to mislead the people of God.

“Now is the time to return to the faith which was truly once and for all delivered by Christ and the apostles.”

*The Good News Magazine*, “The Faith Once and for all Delivered”, August 1974, Page 27 & 29



“God says: ‘There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, **one faith** . . .’ (Eph. 4:4-5).

**“One faith - meaning one body of beliefs, one set of doctrines, one perfectly harmonious truth believed and practiced by the true Church of God.** Unless a point of truth you may believe fits perfectly and harmoniously into the whole of the doctrine of Christ - unless each truth you have learned only further serves to elucidate, clarify and further explain the whole of the plan of God - then it may *not* be a ‘truth,’ but error.”

Booklet, *Seven Proofs of God's Church*, Page 30

“Take a look at Ephesians, the book of Ephesians chapter four. You know, it's instructive that if anyone could alter the words of God, the most qualified to do so is Jesus Christ himself. He's absolutely perfect. **And yet, in the Scripture, he goes, time after time after time, to say that he doesn't alter it, he doesn't change it, that they're not His words. And that he faithfully passed along, just the way the Father gave it. And each of us in our own lives, should do exactly the same thing,** following God's will, following God's way. Notice in Ephesians, chapter four and verse 11, ‘And he gave’, Christ did ‘some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, so that the Church, the people that are the saints, would be perfect, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying or the building of the Body of Christ, until we all come’, all of us, ‘in the unity of the faith.’

**“There's one faith, and there's one way to go, ‘And of the knowledge of the Son of God’, with the knowledge of God's way, the knowledge that he brought from the Father. ‘Until 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 fullness of Christ’, until we to can be called the Word of God, identified with God's way, and to be filled with it. Although, we may never have that title, that's his, but until we follow that word, until we are like it, and we all have the same mind, and we serve God with one consent. And when we are, when Christ brings that unity to his Church, it can be clearly said, that the Church is on the tracks.”

Sermonette, “Back on Track”, Bob Fahey, December 12, 1981

### Summary and a Final Point

At this juncture in the article, it is very important to summarize what we have just come to understand. All Biblical truth originates from God the Father. Jesus Christ in turn receives all truth from the Father. He is the one who directs him on what He should say. All true apostles receive the truth from Jesus Christ directly. The first century apostles, including the apostle Paul, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century apostle who led the Philadelphia era of the Church, Mr. Armstrong, received the Father's truth from Jesus Christ.

The Church of God receives the truth through the apostles. The 1<sup>st</sup> century Church received the truth from the apostles. Mr. Armstrong often referred to these truths as the “original truths”. And since Mr. Armstrong received the truth from Jesus Christ, he received the “original truths” that were once delivered unto the saints



in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. And thus, the “original truths” that came from the Father were restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church of God.

The final point that is so important to understand is that **the Father is the author of all of the truth**. These are the precious truths that we are all commanded to hold fast to (Rev. 3:11) and earnestly contend for, which is the faith that was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). This is why it is so imperative not to compromise, water down or alter in any shape or form, with the “original truths” that were restored to the Church in the 6<sup>th</sup> era:

**“But there has been an effort to water down the truth. That's another thing that has happened in the last 9 years.** We're trying to water down the truth of God with false doctrines that have been creeping in and ministers are teaching them, around the world even ministers of this Church! Now, believe you me, I am going to get after those things, and fast!

“Jesus Christ is in power. Jesus Christ is the power back of it and He is going to set these things in order. And if any of you want to fight Christ, you start fighting Him and see where you get off. Or if you want to go with the devil, maybe you'll suffer the devil's fate. I am speaking very plainly today. I'm a little wrought up about it.

“Revelation 3:8, ‘I know’ He knows our works. So there are works and they're good works, and not rituals. ‘Behold, He set this open door. You have but a little strength, **and hast kept my word.**’

**“I was going to say, if there is any one reason why God called me, it is because I was willing to believe what He said, and because I had kept His Word and I have not compromised.”**

Sermon, “Warning to the Church”, Herbert W Armstrong, July 1, 1978

**“God revealed truth to me and if there is any reason why He has chose me, there's only one.** It's not because of any righteousness of mine, it's not because of any abilities or powers of mine. I've known scores upon scores of men with better minds than I have, better personality, better appearance, more leadership, I'd say about more of everything that you think of humanly. But God has not called them or used them. Why? Why did He pick on one as inferior as I am? **Because I was willing to believe Him.** Adam and Eve didn't believe Him. Jesus Christ talked to thousands who didn't believe Him. **Only a hundred and twenty still believed Him after Christ had talked for three and a half years to multiple thousands of people.**

**“But I did believe Him, and I have not compromised with that belief one iota and I've been working hard the last two and a half years to get this Church back on the track** after others were getting it off the track. I don't think we are a hundred percent back yet. I don't think we have gotten all of the leaven out yet. But it's going out, believe me; and we're going to get it out.”

Sermon, “Revelation 12”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 18, 1981

## Chapter 2

### When an Apostasy Strikes the Church

#### The Action that God's People must take when False Doctrines enter into the Church of God

A defection from the truths of God is a horrible event that sometimes happens in the Church and that God's people sometimes have to go through. These events often leave the brethren confused, disoriented and discouraged. And many often give up and leave the faith altogether when these occurrences happen. This is not to mention that some of God's people will not leave an apostasy but instead, will stay where heresy has taken root and will compromise the faith of their beliefs.

The leaders of the Church are supposed to care for and nourish the flock the true teachings found in the Bible. But when false doctrines are introduced to the membership from the top leadership of the Church, there is only one action that God's people can take. And that is to leave the visible organization. The sheep must leave because God's people simply cannot remain where heresy has taken root and is being taught. This is because heresy is the equivalent of poison. Nor should God's people compromise the faith of the beliefs that they once adhered to by becoming members of groups who have compromised, altered or watered down the truth.

In fact, you will soon see that it is Jesus Christ who ultimately leads those that have been begotten by His spirit out of an organization that has become compromised with false teachings. So those who leave an apostasy are truly led out of this bad situation by Christ Himself. And you will soon see that it is Jesus Christ that will ultimately guide His sheep back to the place where he is working, the spiritual organism that is the one true Church and body of Christ:

**"Now, at this period of time, during the Ephesian era, the true Church was kind of in the forefront. **And gradually, there came a falling away**, and the false church began to rise into ascendancy, and by the time of the Smyrna era, the false church had risen into the ascendancy, and the true Church had receded into the background. **The successors of the apostles and the successors of God's people were going through a very dark time.****

**"And yet God continued to protect his people as they looked to him.** So God told him, he said, 'Look, I know what you're having to go through. I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, but aren't. I know the blasphemy of those who say that they are the true representatives of the religion of God. And they're not. They're really the representatives of Satan's religion, and he says, I understand that.' And he says, you don't fear any of the things which you suffer. You'll be cast into prison. It talks about, 'You'll have tribulation 10 days.' There was a particular 10 year period of persecution by Domitian, from 303, to 313. That basically fulfills this time of very intense persecution on them. "Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life."

Sermon, "History of the True Church", John Ogwyn, October 27, 1979

**"Even in Paul's day, my friends, many among those attending the churches that grew large, at Antioch, at Jerusalem, and Ephesus, at Corinth and other places began to apostatize. To turn away**

**from the truth that Jesus had brought direct from God.** God's message to mankind, a message of love bestowed by a loving God on mankind. The way out of this wilderness of headaches, and heartaches, and fears, and worries, and poverty, and all the distresses and sufferings of mankind. Jesus brought the way out of that, He brought the way of truth and He said: '...truth shall make you free.' (John 8:32)

"But: '...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' (John 3:19)

"And they turned away from the truth; they accepted Jesus and His name after they had crucified Him.

"And they proclaimed Christ, they 'accept' Christ, but His message; the way out of all this darkness and unhappiness — no; men love darkness rather than the light and want to stay in the darkness. What is wrong with humanity?

"Even in Paul's day many among those attending at these churches — Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and so on, Jerusalem — **they began to apostatize and turn away from the truth. Division sprang up among them just as Paul said it would, right there at the Church at Ephesus.** Those individuals, unconverted, or turned from God's truth and God's Way of Life, attending in those Churches, false brethren; right in the Churches as Paul said there would be. **And there were already in his time, they were no part of the true Church though they visibly assembled, they were seen with the eye assembling, attending Church meetings with those who were in the True Church.**"

World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, "Apostasy Foretold", Herbert W Armstrong

**"Well, supposing that one even who has received the Holy Spirit changes his mind and wants to go off a different way** and he begins to cause friction and trouble. Some will say 'Yeah, you are still going to have friction in the Church.' Oh, no. We are not, brethren. No we're not! And I want to show you why.

"Next we have to turn back to Romans, the last chapter of Romans, the 16th chapter and verse 17 where Paul says; 'Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions** and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned**, and avoid them.'

**"Different doctrines, they are causing division, they are causing trouble. That is what we had in the past.** And the REASON that we had it was we said, 'Well, we must be more loving and more kind and more good than God; and we must just leave them in among us.' **God says, MARK THEM AND AVOID THEM. Now there are two ways we can avoid them, and only two that I know. One is if we leave them in the Church and we all go out, we're no longer in the church. The other is that we put them out, and we stay in.**"

Sermon, "Unity", Herbert W Armstrong, February 4, 1984

**"Now some of our ministers have wanted to water down that doctrine. And they wanted to change that doctrine.** They didn't want to teach that doctrine of the Bible. **They didn't want to teach the doctrine of Christ and of God.** And so they were causing division and that's why they were put out. And so they come by speaking trying to draw you after them and I'm speaking unto you people that are

going to hear this in the other Churches. And so you say, well I just want to hear what they have to say and so you go. God says don't go! **God says avoid them!**

"Christ taught His chosen apostle through the written word of God. *The Worldwide Church of God*, the same Church as founded in 31 AD, received its doctrine through God's chosen apostle. Every doctrine you have came through God's chosen apostle."

Bible Study, "Romans 15-16", Herbert W Armstrong, July 7, 1980

**An Important Side Note:** There is a unique scenario that has arisen in the Church of God. What if an apostle introduces doctrines that oppose or are not in harmony with the doctrines established by a faithful apostle. What should those who are led by God's spirit do? The instruction Mr. Armstrong gave, who we know was faithful until his death, is to reject such a man as an apostle of Christ. It cannot be overstated that Jesus Christ used Mr. Armstrong as a human instrument to restore the "original truths" to the Philadelphia era of the Church and to this end, he was faithful, therefore, anyone who teaches doctrines contrary to these truths or that are not in harmony with these truths, no matter if they claim to be an apostle, should be rejected:

"We must all think the same thing. The thing is, whoever is the apostle, whoever is guiding and putting the truth into the Church must be honest with the Word of God. **Now, if you ever find me dishonest with the Word of God, you reject me as God's apostle.** But I don't think anybody in the Church has ever found that yet, because I certainly don't intend to be wrong."

Bible Study, "II Corinthians 11", Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980

### **A History of Being Scattered**

The Church of God has had a history of being scattered. In the history of God's Church, there have been 2 general means that have caused God's people to disperse. Persecution by the civil governments of this earth coupled by the prevailing religious system of this world is one reason that has caused God's people to flee. And a second reason is when a defection from the truth occurs within the Church. And this has sometimes originated within the Church by the top leaders or leader. This second reason is often the one that causes doctrinal confusion, division and a scattering.

Therefore, it should be understood that although these events have happened in the history of God's Church, and that there are times when God's people have scattered, it is not a normal state of the Church of God, nor is it the way that a loving and caring God intends for His people to remain in, as you will soon see later in this chapter:

"And so The True Church, my friends, is that body of individuals, whether organized or scattered, that have always been persecuted and been unpopular and Jesus called them the little flock. Now, **I was showing you in the Bible where very early in their history, a great persecution arose and they were**

**all scattered. Later, there was another Church at Jerusalem but later that was scattered again. And I read you the scriptures prophesying that the Church would be scattered. And it has been scattered.**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "History of the True Church Part 1", Herbert W Armstrong

"But the True Church of God is an invisible, spiritual organism of those people that have, and are led by, the Spirit of God, in whom Jesus Christ has come to live His life for them. That's the True Church, composed of all those people, regardless of whether they are organized together, know each other, and are working together, or whether they are not, whether they assemble in one place, or whether they are completely scattered. It is those individuals that make up the True Church.

**"Now in many times we find their history on down through every century and at times they've been completely scattered and not organized. At other times, at least a large portion of them, or groups of them, have gotten together and they have been organized and they have known one another. And they have actually been organized and conducted God's work."**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "The One True Church", Herbert W Armstrong

**Note:** Some have used the quotes by Mr. Armstrong from a World Tomorrow Broadcast titled "Apostasy Foretold" as proof that the Church has been prophesied to be scattered at the end of the age and thus should be scattered at this time. Those who cite statements from this broadcast quote Mr. Armstrong out of context. The context of this broadcast is the scattering that has occurred in the history of God's Church and not of a coming and future apostasy. The following is the statement that Mr. Armstrong makes at the beginning of this broadcast, about 1 minute into the broadcast. And it sets the context of the entire broadcast:

"Now I've shown you how Christ himself foretold apostasy. False preachers accepting His name, proclaiming His person, coming in His name saying, He is the Christ, and yet deceiving the world. And how New Testament Prophecies foretold apostasy. How the Apostle Paul said the mystery of iniquity did already work in his time, in his day, in Second Thessalonians the second chapter. **Now, were ready for the actual history. Now, you read a little of the history from Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire, that is history of the declining and fall of the Roman empire, the most authentic history.**"

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "Apostasy Foretold", Herbert W Armstrong

### **The Responsibility of all Ministers**

The Bible refers to all ministers in the Church of God as 'elders'. This includes all ministerial ranks in the Church from apostle to a local elder. All ordained ministers in the Church of God are instructed to serve as shepherds and as leaders. Therefore, it is the duty of all ministers **to protect**, care for, and nourish the begotten children of God. This is the primary responsibility of all ministers in the Church regardless of their rank.

The ultimate test for all true ministers is when they have to protect the sheep from wolves, thieves and robbers. Wolves are men who cloak themselves as ministers. These men often reveal their true nature when

they try to draw away Christ's sheep after their own following/teachings. These individuals are known for changing, watering down, or introducing teachings that oppose the truths that come from God.

And it should be noted that there is Biblical proof that there are also some men who are ordained in the Church of God and who will turn away from the truth and will teach false doctrines. The follow scriptures are indicative of this fact, Acts 20:30, Jude 4, Titus 1:10, II Tim. 3:13 and II Thess. 2:4.

**Therefore, it is the primary duty of all true shepherds, regardless of their rank, to protect the sheep from wolves and deceivers,** and to help the sheep when a wolf appears. This includes ministers who are local elders. And if necessary, a shepherd must give his life for the sheep that he has been entrusted to protect. Ministers who do not fulfill this responsibility or who fail to act in this regard are called hirelings, John 10:11-13. A hireling is an individual who has been entrusted to protect God's sheep but fails to do so when a wolf or a thief appears. Christ's faithful apostle instructed the entire ministry to do protect and care for the sheep if and when such men appear:

**"So now, once spiritually begotten, we are merely a spiritual embryo. Now we must be fed and nourished on SPIRITUAL food! Jesus said man shall not live by bread (physical food) alone, but by EVERY WORD OF GOD (spiritual food)!"** This we drink in from the Bible! But we drink in this spiritual knowledge and character, also, through personal, intimate, continuous contact with God through PRAYER, and through Christian fellowship with God's children in his Church. And also by the continual teaching imparted by the Church.

"Now the *physical* embryo and fetus is fed physically through the mother. God's CHURCH is called Jerusalem *above* 'which is the MOTHER OF US ALL' (Gal. 4:26). Notice the exact parallel! The CHURCH is the spiritual MOTHER OF ITS MEMBERS. **God has set his called and chosen ministers in his Church to FEED THE FLOCK** - 'for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body [CHURCH] 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' (Eph. 4:11-13).

**"It is the duty of Christ's TRUE ministers (and how scarce today) to PROTECT the begotten but yet unborn saints from false doctrines, from false ministers."**

**"The HUMAN mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best PROTECT it from physical harm;** and that protection is part of her function, as well as to nourish the unborn child! **Even so, the CHURCH, through Christ's ministers, instructs, teaches, counsels with, advises, and PROTECTS from spiritual harm the unborn members!** What a WONDERFUL picture is human reproduction of spiritual SALVATION!"

Book, *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W Armstrong

"On December 20, 1952, by authority of Jesus Christ, with fasting and prayer and laying on of hands of God's ministers, in congregation assembled in Pasadena, California, upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees of The Radio Church of God, five of our young ministers were fully ordained..."

**"This ordination authorizes these ministers to perform all the duties and exercise all the powers of the clergy, and clothes them with all the AUTHORITY** by Herbert W. Armstrong conferred by Jesus Christ upon His called and chosen ministers."

*The Good News Magazine, "Seven Ministers Ordained", Herbert W Armstrong, February 1953*

"10. While we are in the spiritually begotten state, who does the Bible show is our spiritual "mother"? Gal. 4:26. How does she feed, nurture, guide and protect the spiritually begotten children of God the Father? Eph. 4: 11-13, I Pet. 5:1-2.

**"God's Church is indeed the 'mother of us all.' As a mother carries her unborn baby where it is protected and nourished, so also God 's Church, through God 's called and chosen ministry, instructs, teaches, counsels, advises and protects from spiritual harm the unborn members.**

"It is through the ministry of God's Church that each Spirit-begotten child of God is fed the spiritual food that helps it to grow spiritually during the 'prebirth gestation period' - the pre-spiritual birth state - that is this human life. And it is at the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as at God's other annual Holy Days and weekly Sabbaths, that begotten children of God meet together to receive spiritual nourishment from our spiritual 'mother.'"

*The Good News Magazine, "Rejoice with Your Spiritual Family at the Feast", Richard H Sediak, September 1981*

"Christ is the living HEAD of the Church! HE sets the apostle in office. But we do find historic example in the New Testament of the apostle setting in office the evangelists, pastors and teachers, and even delegating to the evangelists the responsibility of ordaining pastors and other elders, and deacons.

"By a study of other New Testament passages, we learn that there were, besides pastors, both preaching and nonpreaching elders in local churches. All elders were teachers, but not all were preachers.

**"Also we learn by various Scriptures that all these officers are called ELDERS. A non-preaching elder, who must be a leader and apt to teach, is, of course, an elder.** So is the preaching-elder, also the pastor, and also the evangelist. And even Peter, the apostle, was also an elder. In the New Testament the terms bishop and overseer are synonymous with elder.

**"Now in addition to these spiritual offices of administration and authority, THRU WHICH Christ governs His Church,** we find also the helping offices of deacon and deaconess (I Timothy 2: 8-13)."

*The Good News Magazine, "Six More Ministers Ordained Now", Herbert W Armstrong, February-March 1955*

"There is no record that we have, in the Church today, any prophets. Although in both First Corinthians twelve and in Ephesians, let's see, it's five, isn't it, or four, we read that God set in the Church, in order

of rank and of responsibility for the various administrations, operations, and services that are performed by members of the Church.

“First apostles, then prophets, and then evangelists, and then elders or then pastors, as one of them says, and then elders. **And you'll find in other scriptures that some of the elders were ministers and preaching elders, and others did not preach at all, but were just sort of leaders, and if the preacher or the minister was not there he would at least take charge of the meeting.** For some years we had a man like that, Basil Wolverton, but later he was made an elder, but for a long time he was not, **but he did hold the Church together for years.**”

Bible Study, “Galatians 3-4”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 5, 1980

“No serious Bible student could successfully argue, based upon the Scriptures or upon the laws of logic, that the Bible propounds any governmental structure except that in which God is the living head. Thus it is a theocracy, which means a government by God. Indeed, **God the Father is supreme commander of all things, including the Church;** even Christ stated, ‘My Father is greater than I’ (John 14:28). **Even so, the Bible directly states that Jesus Christ has been delegated the overall direction of the affairs of the Church.** Read Ephesians 1:22, 5:23 and Matthew 16:16-18.

**“Although the Scriptures clearly pronounce Jesus to be the Church's Head, the government of the Church does not cease with Christ.** To the contrary, while Christ is the cornerstone of the government, **He appoints men to official positions under Him as parts of the governmental foundation.** In Ephesians 2:19-20 Paul states the Church is ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.’

“In the New Testament, the offices of government are primarily those of the ministry, with other administrative offices being filled by qualified lay persons as necessary. See Ephesians 4:11: ‘And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.’

“I Corinthians 12:28 mentions other un-ordained offices that fill administrative functions.

**“And it is plain from these verses that although all ministers are ‘elders’ (a general term roughly equivalent with ‘minister’), all ministers are not of equal rank or responsibility.**

**“Other verses, such as I Timothy 5:17 (‘Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor’) and I Corinthians 5:1-5 (which shows the power of the ministry to discipline), all prove that God has given the ministry authority to govern and not merely to preach truth** without being able to enforce it within the Church.

“Hence we see that the Church is governed through its officers, the ministry, according to their individual ranks and function, under the direction of Jesus Christ, who Himself is subject to God the Father.

“But of supreme importance are two remaining questions regarding proper government in the Church. First: Who appoints the ministers in the Church and how? Second, since the leaders of the Church are



appointed and not elected, who keeps the leaders on track and guides their actions to ensure they remain steadfast?

“To begin with the first question, ministers are appointed to their posts and ordained to their ranks by the Church, through the other ministers who are already ordained. This is in accordance with clear biblical directives.

“Christ told His disciples that they had not chosen Him, but that He had chosen them (John 15:16). They were not voted in nor did they volunteer. Further, the apostles were commanded by God to ordain others (Acts 13:1-3), and Paul directed that qualified men be ordained (Titus 1:5).

“As can be seen, the office of the ministry is not something for which one can volunteer or something one can choose for himself in the traditional sense.

“Because ministers are appointed by those above them in the chain of authority, one might wonder how the chief minister of the Church, the pastor general, is chosen, and by whom...

**“In the case where an existing pastor general anticipates his own death or disability, he may, after prayer and wise counsel, himself appoint a qualified successor. If he dies or becomes disabled without having appointed a successor, the ministers of highest rank in the Church would appoint a successor according to God's will after prayer. If no such appointment were made, God would by circumstances of His own design thrust the man of His choice into the forefront of His Work (even against the man's own will if necessary — see Jonah 1 and 2).**

**“It must be stressed that God chooses the man appointed to the job of pastor general. The individual does not choose himself. It is not something for which a man can volunteer.** Neither is it the choice of the man or men who may appoint him, although they might be used as human agents to discover God's will and then implement it. The choice is God's.

“He places each member of the Church into whatever responsibility in the Church pleases Him (I Corinthians 12:18).”

*The Good News Magazine, “Prove All Things: Government in God’s Church”, Worldwide Church of God, May 1986*

### **The Shepherds Voice**

When God’s people become scattered due to a falling away from the truth, they remain in His hand and under His protection until God finds and sends a faithful minister or ministers to gather His sheep. God’s Church is a united spiritual organism and it is always led and fed by a faithful shepherd and the true Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ cares for and loves His people and he knows that it is for their own good, safety and protection that they remain together and under the care and protection of a faithful shepherd. Remember, Jesus Christ said he is a gatherer, and those shepherds who gather not with Him will be held responsible for scattering His sheep abroad, Matt. 12:30.

Therefore, when God's sheep become scattered due to a falling away from the truth, it is ultimately the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ who will gather His sheep back together again. Jesus Christ will never force anyone or compel anyone to follow Him. And since it was the voice of Christ that led His people out of an apostasy, it will be the voice of Christ that will lead His sheep back to His one true Church and the place where He is gathering His sheep:

**“And the gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his sheep by name and he leads them out. When he has brought all his sheep outside, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him, because they knew his voice.** They will not follow a stranger’ (John 10:3-5 Moffat Translation)

**“Now he doesn't drive them. He leads and they follow.** And there it is again. **Christ leads. He does not drive anyone. If you notice: Jesus Christ never once forced anyone to agree with Him or to believe what He preached.”**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Truth Restored”, Herbert W Armstrong

“Now I just wondered, in the Moffat translation, how he called that porter. I hadn't remembered, and it's gatekeeper. ‘Truly, truly I tell you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs up somewhere else. He is a thief and a robber. He who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice.’

“And incidentally, 'gate' is a better word in modern English than 'door,' because a door you think of as in a house, and you don't imagine the sheep coming into your parlor or your beautiful drawing room or living room or something of that sort, do you? But 'gate' is the thing that would lead into the corral of the sheep.

**“And the gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his sheep by name and he leads them out. When he has brought all his sheep outside, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him, because they knew his voice.** They will not follow a stranger.’

**“Now he doesn't drive them. He leads and they follow.** And there it is again. **Christ leads. He does not drive anyone. If you notice, Jesus Christ never once forced anyone to agree with Him or to believe what He preached.”**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “John 9-10”, Herbert W Armstrong

### **The Loner Christian**

A doctrinal truth that was restored by Jesus Christ to the Philadelphia era of the Church was the one true Church doctrine. This is equivalent to the body of Christ or the spiritual organism that Christ works in and with. As you have seen from the pages of your Bible and as Mr. Armstrong has expounded upon over and over again, there is only One True Church. Jesus Christ started only one Church, Matthew 16:18.

Jesus Christ restored the “original truth” of the one true Church doctrine to the Philadelphia era of the Church. And the Philadelphia era of the Church was united together as one body and took the form of the one true Church. And the binding element that kept the Church together were the true doctrines that were restored to this era by Christ.

Brethren of the one true God, you will soon hear Mr. Armstrong state that “It is needful that we be in the Church.” The “Loner Christian”, a member who believes he can remain on his own and keep the truth by himself is not inside the body of Christ. The “Loner Christian” is outside the one true Church, although he may still be a Christian. In Christ’s final prayer to His Father He prayed that God the Father would keep His people together as one, **“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”**, John 17:21:

“Now it seems like he sort of ended a part of his letter there, but he begins a very important part again in which we have here divided, as men have divided it, into chapter four, ‘I therefore a prisoner for the Lord’, and he was literally a prisoner, actually in prison, ‘beg of you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love.’

**“And I tell you, we do have to do that because we do get on one another's nerves, we just do, ‘eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit’, so that we're together and not separated. To maintain that, we must have an eagerness to do that, we must want to do it, a desire to do it, ‘of the Spirit in the bond of peace’, that is, peace is a bond that binds us together. ‘There is one body and one Spirit.’**

**“Now there's one body, one Church, not many churches, and that Church is all bound together as I said, like a building. And if you take a part of a building and put it one place, and another part way off a thousand miles away, and another part two thousand miles in some other direction, what kind of a building are you going to have? And that's the kind of building that people think God is going to have, that want to just be loner Christians all alone by themselves.** ‘One body and one Spirit’, only the one Spirit of God, and that's not a Spirit of malice, is not a spirit of resentment or bitterness. It's not a spirit of envy or jealousy. It's not a spirit of hostile competition. The way of get is a wrong spirit, or attitude. That's the way the world is living. The way of God is give, and it's the attitude of love, which is out flowing, first to God and then for the good and the welfare of others equal to the welfare of yourself.”

Bible Study, “Ephesians 3-4”, Herbert W Armstrong, January 2, 1981

**“What about the ‘loner’ Christian who says, ‘I will serve Christ in my own way’?** What about the one who leaves God's Church to have his own private relation with Christ—to get his own salvation—without giving his part of the Church's effort to send the true gospel into ALL THE WORLD?

“Or, what about the one who follows a MAN because of that man's personality, charisma or attractiveness, or some other group?

“Stop and THINK!

“Is Christ going to marry a number of differing groups, not in complete harmony with each other—yet all ‘professing CHRIST’?

**“Jesus said, ‘He that is not with me [and since He is the Head of God's one and only Church, He plainly meant with Him where HE is working—in God's one Church] is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad’ (Matthew 12:30).**

**“Jesus Christ is going to marry THE ONE AND ONLY TRUE CHURCH—not a number of scattered groups or scattered individuals.”**

*The Plain Truth Magazine, “7 Proofs of God’s True Church: Part Seven”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 1979*

“And there were some that wanted to follow Christ. **And now too often, we have people that want to follow Christ, but they want to follow Christ alone, and they want to go outside of the Church.** And they don't realize that Christ is in the Church, and Christ is the head of the Church and when you're outside, maybe you're outside of Christ. **And also, a lot of people have not realized that they have wanted to be a ‘loner Christian’.**

“Now there's a reason why God raised up the Church. If people could just receive the holy spirit, and all by themselves, get along, and grow in grace and knowledge, grow in character development, which is the very reason God has put humanity on earth, and finally come into God's kingdom, maybe we could all just be alone and have nothing to do with other Christians. In fact, we might just avoid them. **But if we did that, we wouldn't have the spirit of God. That wouldn't be the right attitude of the Spirit of God.**”

*Bible Study, “II Corinthians 11”, Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980*

**“The ‘loner Christian’ that says,** ‘I’ll just be there all by myself as a Christian, is not going to make it.’ I wouldn’t give you a nickel for his chances of getting into the kingdom of God. Now maybe he might make it. I don’t know whether he has one chance in 100, or one chance in 10,000 of getting into the kingdom. But the chances I will tell you, are against him, very, very much. **And it is needful that we be in the Church.**”

*Bible Study, “II Corinthians 11”, Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980*

## Chapter 3

### God's People at the End of the Age

#### Laodicea Outside the Body of Christ The People that Judge, Rule, Decide and Change Doctrine

The last era of the Church is the Laodicean era. The prevalent condition of God's people at the end of the age is described in Rev. 3:14-20 and their description is given by Jesus Christ. The next several excerpts provide a great insight on the spiritual condition of this group. Although no one would want to be described by Jesus Christ in same manner that he describes the 7<sup>th</sup> era, it is prudent for all of God's people to take some time and consider our ways to determine if we are in this deplorable state.

Some of the problems that these verses describe stem from altering, changing, or watering down of the truth. Remember, these are God the Father's truths. He is the author of all truth and they are precious to Him. The major pitfall that has led God's people towards this condition is the loss of a key doctrine which is that truth enters the Church through an apostle. And that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the office of an apostle and the role of the end-time Elijah who restored all things (Matt. 17:11), meaning the truth to the Church. The quotes below provide a great insight of the condition of the 7<sup>th</sup> era:

**"Going on down, 'To the angel of the Church in Laodicea.' It's an interesting term, the word Laodicea. 'Lao' as I commented earlier means people. 'Dicea', the latter portion of the word comes from the Greek word 'dicea', which is the same word that is translated judge, in the New Testament. People judge. The people judge. It's kind of, do your own thing, type of an approach.**

"Well, wait a minute, I see I'm about to get to five o'clock, so I better not get on too much into that. But anyway, their attitude is basically their problem. If we notice in verse 18, let's pick it up in verse 17, 'You say I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. You know not that you're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel you to buy me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich, and white raiment, that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear. Anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.'

**"Part of their basic problem is the fact that their spiritual self evaluation differs very greatly from the evaluation, Jesus Christ has of them. If they see it, they're in great shape. If Christ sees it, they're miserable, and poor and wretched and blind, and in need of everything. They are not nearly as well off as they think they are. But they can't see themselves as Christ sees them."**

Sermon, "History of the True Church", John Ogwyn, October 27, 1979

"But God's people *always* have suffered persecution. Now this world is *Satan's world*. And the persecution is *always* instituted from Satan. He *hates* God's people. He hates God's truth. He doesn't want us to believe it. And yet, Satan himself can do only "what God *allows*." Now that means that this persecution could not have come on us if God had not allowed it.

"And God *did* allow it. God is *letting us suffer this persecution*, and we need to "wake up and realize that. *Why* has God done it? Simply because the Church of the Philadelphia era was becoming lukewarm. **We were becoming Laodicean.** We were drifting apart from God. **Some of our ministers even were watering down doctrines.** We were getting more interested in the things of this world and the ways of this world than the things of God. Many were trying to see how close they could come to Satan's world and its ways and its ways of life and its life-styles. But just so they could still somehow get into the kingdom."

*The Worldwide News*, "War is still on", Herbert W Armstrong, March 12, 1979

"As long as this Church believed and spoke THE SAME THING Christ put in it through His, apostle, HE BLESSED IT, and it GREW 30 percent a year for 35 years. But when my son Garner Ted came to take over more authority than had been delegated to him, **surrounding himself with a group of liberals, who LED him, and Misled him into watering down God's doctrines** – under their false influence a **Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference, losing the LOVE of God's TRUTH**, found root in the Church. Christ BUILT this Church through His chosen apostle! We did, perhaps imperfectly, but certainly in general, SPEAK THE SAME THING! We GREW in Christ's KNOWLEDGE and truth as well as in size and scope of the Work."

*The Worldwide News*, "And Now Christ Sets Church Back On Track Doctrinally!", Herbert W Armstrong, February 19, 1979

"**Then he says in verse 14, to the Laodiceans,** in verse 15, 'I know your works. You're neither cold nor hot. I would you were cold or hot, but because you're lukewarm, and not cold or hot.' You know if you're cold, you've never really been called, and never really been converted. God's spirit has never really been with you. If you're hot, well that's someone who's on fire for God. God would rather that you be on fire for him, or not even know him. But to be lukewarm, that's the worst thing you could be. That is just what a lot of people are, because you're lukewarm, you're not cold or hot, Christ said that I'll spew you out of my mouth. Because you say I'm rich and increased with goods.

"Now, this isn't saying, if you find the people who are prospered, and you find the people who have wealthy colleges, and nice facilities, that's Laodicean. You'd better read that a little more carefully. Don't let anybody kid you that way. Look at what it does say. The person who is **the Laodicean** is saying to himself, 'I am rich and increased with goods and have needed nothing.' He feels secure, feels good about himself. I don't feel good about myself, and I hope you don't feel good about yourself either. **But there are people who just feel real good about themselves. They're not worried about being lukewarm. They're not worried about not keeping God's word, about not obeying God's ways totally.** Because of the attitude of self security, and not knowing your real condition, God says you're really not rich. You don't know that you're wretched, miserable and poor and blind, and naked. Do you see the way God sees them? **But the person is self deceived. That's the problem with the individual. God isn't saying, yeah, that's right, you people are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. The person feels that way to himself. God didn't say that. God said, 'Your wretched miserable, poor blind and naked.'**" That's what God says about them. That's their real true condition.

“But their attitude towards themselves, they think they’re alright. People that went out of God's Church, they think they’re alright, you can't put me out of the Church. I'm not out of the Church. People who think they're more righteous than we are saying, well, you know, ever since Mrs. Armstrong died, why Mr. Armstrong and the Church have been forsaken, and God hasn't been with them. **People who feel more righteous, well, they've changed true doctrines into errors, but look, the real truth is, they think they're spiritually rich. God says, you're not. You're spiritually blind.** You don't have a wedding garment on of God's righteous, you're naked. **You're not really rich, like you think you are, in faith and good works. You're really poor, wretched and miserable, because they're lukewarm,** that's the real key.”

Sermon, “The Meaning of the Feast of Trumpets”, Dean Blackwell, 1977

“‘And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.’ (Acts 2:1) You will notice that the church started out with those who were with ONE ACCORD. **Do you know why some have dropped off and split from this church? They were not in one accord with us.** Several that have gone out, that were our ministers, have tried to start little churches of their own, but they’re not in one accord with one another or with us.

“**Now I’ve said to the one that probably has the largest of these little splinter-off churches,** I’ve said, ‘Show me where this Church is not in accord with God and God’s Word, and I will change and I’m sure the whole Church will change with me.’”

Sermon, “Pentecost”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 10, 1984

### **The Fate of Laodicea**

Mr. Armstrong understood that the fate of Laodicea is described in Rev. 12:17. And that many of God’s people would have to make the ultimate sacrifice and pay a heavy price for the condition that they have allowed themselves to drift into. It is my hope and prayer that none of God’s people suffer the fate of Laodicea:

“My friends, you'd better ‘be accounted worthy to escape all these things, as Jesus promised in the twenty-first chapter of Luke, and ‘to stand before the Son of Man.’

“Which Church is this, the Devil is so angry with? Which Church is it he's persecuting? The one that had to flee into the wilderness, not great organized powers, not all these sectarian denominations and divisions. **But, verse 17, ‘The dragon, who is the Devil, was wroth with the woman, the true Church of Christ, and went to make war with the remnant.** That's the last generation of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’ It's the Church that keeps the commandments of God and has the true testimony of Christ.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “What is the True Church Like?”, Herbert W Armstrong

## **The Philadelphia Remnant at the End of the Age The People of God that Keep the Word of Christ**

Mr. Armstrong never anticipated and could not have imagined what would occur to the *Worldwide Church of God* after his death. He would have been horrified if he knew. And God did not disclose the specific details to him that the top leadership of the *Worldwide Church of God* would apostatize from the truth and that most would leave the truth altogether. And that the remaining brethren would fracture into several splinters and numerous slivers. In addition, there are now many scattered brethren, "Loner Christians" who believe this is the appropriate way to remain in, if one wants to hold fast to the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

Mr. Armstrong believed that the *Worldwide Church of God*, which he understood was the Philadelphia era of the Church that Jesus Christ used him as a human instrument to raise up, would continue as the one true Church proclaiming the gospel up until the Great Tribulation. And he believed that the Laodicean era would arise during the Great Tribulation. And once again, God did not reveal these specific details to him of how the Laodicean era would arise, just like God did not allow the prophet Daniel to understand the meaning of end-time prophecies that he recorded in the Bible:

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.' That's 3 ½ years, 'from the face of the serpent.'

**"And then he goes after the remnant that'll be the Laodicean Church** and persecutes them. And then Christ comes. And half of that Church, you read in Matthew 25, the door is shut, and they're kicked out or kept out, and half go in. **That's the Laodicean Church** that hasn't risen up yet. **That'll come up out of the Great Tribulation, just ahead of us now.**"

Sermon, "From Sardis to Laodicea", Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1983

"And our Work will stop very soon after this Holy Roman Empire has this next, and last, resurrection, and our work will stop and then will come the Great Tribulation. **And out of it and during the Great Tribulation will rise up the Laodicean Era of God's Church.**

"Well you are either going to risk death, or you're going to take the mark of the beast, one or the other, unless we are taken to a place of protection and safety, and there are two places in the book of Revelation that certainly indicate we shall be. But it's going to take a miracle. Now it took a miracle from God to get the Israelites out of Egypt way back there in the days of Moses."

Sermon, "The Mark of the Beast", Herbert W Armstrong, December 11, 1982

Therefore, Mr. Armstrong always believed that the *Worldwide Church of God* would go to the place of Safety as one united body of Christ, and not as a bunch of scattered groups or scattered individual "Loner Christian" who would all arrive there in various ways. Those who purport this idea, that the Church would arrive at the



place of safety as a bunch of scattered groups or scattered individuals, either take Mr. Armstrong's words out of context and/or have come to believe something that was never taught during the Philadelphia era.

There are numerous articles and sermons that were given in *Worldwide Church of God* that establish that the Philadelphia era of the Church would be protected in a place of safety during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. And Mr. Armstrong also understood that this Church would adhere to all of the truths restored and revealed to the 6<sup>th</sup> era by Jesus Christ, which included the unity of the faith doctrine which was a central doctrinal teaching that everyone once understood and held fast to. Additional and vital commentary on how God works inside the body of Christ is coming up in the next point that is made, but for now, the following are a few excerpts regarding the Philadelphia remnant, who are those who hold fast to the doctrines of the 6<sup>th</sup> era:

“But anyway, we have a picture here of a situation that was at the beginning of the early 1900s. **Then we find the Church in Philadelphia**, ‘These things says He that is holy, He that is true, He that as the key of David, He that opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. I know your works. Behold, I've set before you an open door, and no man can shut it. **You have a little strength and have kept my word** and have not denied My name.’ We've not denied the name, Church of God. We've not denied the authority. And the word “name” carries the connotation of authority. We've not denied the authority of Jesus Christ and his government in our lives. ‘Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. I will make them to come and worship before your feet and know that I love you, because **you kept the word of my patience.**’ **Brethren, this is the crux that it says to us, ‘Because you kept the word of my patience.’ You've waited for me to do what I said I would do. That's been the test on this era.**

“Those who've left the Church over the years have basically become impatient. They left because they wouldn't wait for God to do what he said. You know, sometimes, what they left over, maybe they had a point, technically. There were those who left over the issue of which day Pentecost should be, because they had convinced themselves that Jesus Christ could no longer rule the Church, and straighten out problems, and so they left. And where are they? Well, they don't even keep it on any day. So you know, what good does it do?

“There were those left over various things. There were those that left during the 70s. They said, ‘Everything's going to the dogs.’ Well, as problems began to be straightened out, where are they? **There are those that have left and probably will leave over other things that either have happened or will happen. Those who will become impatient, to wait for God to do what he said he would do. Those who ultimately will comprise the Philadelphia Church are those who have kept the word of his patience.** “Because you kept the word of my patience, I will also keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come up on all the world, to try them that dwell upon on the earth.” I'll keep you from the time of the tribulation. “Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which you have that no man take your crown.” This is the only Church era that it makes this particular statement to. **‘Behold, I come quickly.’ So, you know, realize that this era was raised up as an end time era. Hold that that**

**fast which you have.** Don't let anybody take your crown. God called you for a job. He has a place for you. Don't trade that place in. Don't throw away that crown. It goes on, "He overcomes I'll make a pillar in the temple of my God."

Sermon, "History of the True Church", John Ogwyn, October 27, 1979

"Now notice 'Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them but woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath.' Whose wrath? The Devil. This is the wrath of the Devil. The Devil is causing this tribulation because 'he knoweth he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted' who? **This woman, this Church, the true Church that Jesus built.** It's the one the devil is wroth with. It's the one the Devil is angry with. It's the one the Devil is persecuting, brought forth the man child, Christ. **'And to the woman were given the two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is to be for now.'** This is a literal three-and-a-half years."

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "What is the True Church Like?", Herbert W Armstrong

"Now then, in God's way, the one who is the ruler is also the servant. And He gives the rulership over to the one who is the servant. And so Jesus Christ is my minister. He's my pastor, he is my servant in a way but he's also my master and my ruler. But He is doing the ruling for my good. And I learned that years ago. And I found it to be true by experience.

**"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,** which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

**"The Philadelphia church is kept from this sore trial** that is going to come on all the world. This verse does not refer to any period of temptation the whole world went through during the time the original, small church at Philadelphia existed. It can only refer to the Great Tribulation, but different words are used...

"God pictures, in Revelation 12:14, a woman living in perilous times, persecuted by the devil. This woman is 'given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.'

**"This woman symbolizes the Church of God**, that group of people who are individually begotten and led by the Holy Spirit — who are living in obedience to God (Rom. 8:9, Acts 5:32). God says of His Church, 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth' (Rev. 3:10).

**"Now what is the woman protected from?** Revelation 12:13 shows that the woman — **God's Church — will be protected from Satan's wrath**, after Satan is cast down to the earth (verse 9). **Satan's persecution of the Church is in the time of 'great tribulation,'** which will be, according to Matthew 24:21, 'such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.'"

*The Good News Magazine*, "Is there a Place of Safety?", Leroy Neff, May 1982

## God Works inside the Body of Christ And the Necessity of the Church

Some use Daniel 12:7 to substantiate their claim that it is okay for “Loner Christians” to remain scattered and to hold fast on their own. It is worth reviewing what is recorded in Daniel 12:7, “...and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.”

Before moving forward, there is one point that we should all meditate on regarding this verse. If God’s one true Church, the body of Christ, those faithfully holding fast to the truths restored during the Philadelphia era of the Church, are scattered as “Loner Christians” at the end of the age, how will we ever come together in the unity of the faith after arriving at the place of safety? If we cannot unite now and agree on doctrine now, how will we ever unite and agree on truth in the place of safety?

This is not to say that the place of safety should be our goal in life, but the point just mentioned is a valid point. The prophecy in Daniel does indicate that God’s people will be scattered at the end of the age. And it is indicative of a scattering due to a falling away from the truth. But it is more of a self fulfilling prophecy. There will be some brethren who will choose to remain outside the spiritual organism which is the body of Christ. And this is because many “Loner Christians” have lost the key understanding of the unity of the faith, which was a truth that was restored during the Philadelphia era of the Church.

But there is an additional and valid truth to consider. Since Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church, the Church is the spiritual organism that he works through. And we have already seen that there is only one true Church, which is synonymous with the body of Christ, and that Christ is not divided. There should be no doubt then, that at such a critical juncture in the history of God’s Church as we are in now, Jesus Christ would not lead an organized and unified Church, but instead would lead a numerous of scattered brethren who cannot agree on doctrine and who would choose not to unite in truth. The following are some excerpts on this important teaching:

“In Daniel 7, verses 13 & 14, you'll find the vision of Christ coming up there in the clouds of heaven and having this conferred on Him and in the mean time there He is at God's headquarters. It's the headquarters of God's work wherever it might be in the whole universe that is the supreme headquarters of the God's work. And Jesus Christ is there at the Father's throne now, that's where Christ went.

“Now when He was here on this earth, He had a job here to do but He was leaving, so He said. He didn't bow out and leave it. **He called His disciples and He said, ‘I will build My Church.’ And they've become the body through whom God works. God works through the body of Christ when He was on earth. Now He works through the collective body of His Church.** Jesus said, ‘I will build My Church.’”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Hebrews Part 10”, Herbert W Armstrong

**“And it’s a little like, you know, Jesus called the people in the Church sheep, and sheep without a shepherd certainly get lost, or they are meat for wolves that are hungry.** Wolves just love sheep. They will kill sheep and eat them.

“Which reminds me that in St. Louis one time many, many years ago, before my conversion, the Association of, I think livestock or sheep people, wanted me to write a large size ad that was to go in newspapers against dogs killing sheep, because stray dogs would get out and kill sheep. Well dogs are of the wolf type, and wolves will prey on sheep.

**“Well, without a shepherd, the sheep become lost.** And I found that, in place after place, little Church groups of maybe five, maybe seven or so would be raised up and I would try to leave a Church there. Now there were even some former brethren in Eugene, and I had believed then, and I had organized a Church and left it in the hands of one of the men that had come up from California as a minister. And it didn't even last three months, because he was not an able or qualified minister. **And so we need a Church.”**

Bible Study, “II Corinthians 11”, Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980

**“Now, Satan is a spirit, and he's the prince of the power of the air. He surcharges the air with his attitude of self centeredness, selfishness and greed, vanity, exalting the self, attitudes of competition, and strife, and jealousy, against other people. Now, that might be all right in a dog.**

“I know we have a little dog visit us once in a while. It belongs to my wife's mother. And when she's here, she's the one who will stand up to me, and she stands up on her hind legs, or front legs against even the chair where I'm sitting or against my trouser leg if I'm standing. And she wants petting.

“Well, then we have this little Sir Hans Armstrong, you know, who is, not much bigger. He's a little bitty dog too, with little tiny, short legs, and he's the deputy sheriff. And he's very jealous. If he's that I'm petting one of the other dogs, he comes running up. He's got to be petted too. So there's a little bit of selfishness even there. Now, I don't know whether he gets that surcharge out of the air, or how he gets it.

“But we find there's a little of it there. Well, maybe that's all right for dogs, but **we humans ought to know better.** And we shouldn't be that way. **So it is necessary that we have a Church.** But it is necessary that in the Church, we all speak the same thing, that we're all alike, and that we do not get into quarrels or divisions.”

Bible Study, “II Corinthians 11”, Herbert W Armstrong, November 14, 1980

### **The Remnant of the Worldwide Church of God**

We left RCG after doctrines that opposed the “original truths” were introduced. And when we left, I was not able to find a Church of God group that was holding fast and adhering to the truths that were once delivered unto the saints in the 6<sup>th</sup> era.

The reason we could not find the one true Church and thus spiritual organism that was holding fast to the truth is because RCG had all of the key attributes of the one true Church, and thus it was the body of Christ when it was on track. And since, only be one body of Christ can exist at any single point in time, it only makes sense that the body of Christ which is the one true Church was nowhere to be found.

I have taken great care to study, research and adhere to the truths we learned in the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Mr. Armstrong because these truths are precious in nature. These truths are the Father's truths. They came from and belong to God the Father. And we should tremble and fear at the thought of inadvertently altering them. The articles that I have written are geared towards helping and reminding God's people of the "original truths" that the Philadelphia era of the Church once adhered to. These are the doctrines that were restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through a human instrument and faithful apostle, Mr. Armstrong.

I have taken great care to provide multiple excerpts from the material that was produced in the 6<sup>th</sup> era to prove the points and sub points that are made in each article. And each article is as thorough as it can be on any given subject. No one else writes or teaches this way. Writing this way is the only method of preventing individuals from quoting Mr. Armstrong out of context or from using just one statement that he made to justify what they believe instead of what Mr. Armstrong truly intended to say. I have also noticed that his statements are often taken out of context.

In addition, I have taken great care to not exceed the limitations of my office of Local elder. All ordained ministers, including Local elders are commissioned to hold fast to the truths that they learned from an apostle. And all ministers, including Local elders are commanded to help God's begotten children and to protect them in a time of apostasy.

The Biblical limitation of an ordained Local elder is to be a teacher and a leader, and to protect God's flock. This was already explained and expounded upon in several excerpts by Mr. Armstrong. Everyone should also understand there is no Biblical scripture or principle that allows a minister to exceed the limitations of the office that he has been ordained to. This is a reason why I do not preach sermons, or create broadcasts, or engage in the proclamation of the gospel, which remember, preaching the gospel is a commission that is given to an apostle. The next article that I write will be on this subject, on the topic of the government of God which will include the responsibility and the limitation of each office and it will contain numerous excerpts from Mr. Armstrong to prove each point.

To be assured that we are being nourished by the same doctrinal truths that were restored by Jesus Christ to the Philadelphia era of the Church, for the spiritual diet, we only use the material that was produced by the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Mr. Armstrong. This includes the many sermons and World Tomorrow Broadcasts/Telecasts that were recorded prior to 1986. And it also consists of posting the monthly *Plain Truth Magazine*, *Good News Magazine*, *Youth Magazine*, "Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course", etc. on the website, because it was the 6<sup>th</sup> era that was instructed to hold fast to the true teachings at the end of the age. This spiritual body of Christ is the remnant of the Church that will be alive at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ:

"You know, there is one little comment I'd like to say right here. **We are part of the remnant of God's one true Church of the Philadelphia era. There is another era yet to come.** I think it'll only exist

briefly, at the most about two-and-half or three years. But, in any event, this Church has taken what was the nearest thing to a slum in Pasadena, which is the very ground on which we are stationed right here, right now! And here is, in some respects, the most beautiful building on the face of the earth put here. This was all slums, and the most beautiful place in Pasadena is this campus.”

Sermon, “Feast of Trumpets”, Herbert W Armstrong, Feast of Trumpets, 1985

“Now, ‘And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.’ And that's where the truth comes from. The Church gets his truth from the apostles and the prophets, ‘And Christ is the chief cornerstone, in the whom, the building, in whom, all the building, fitly framed together, growth unto an holy temple in the Lord.’ The Church is the spiritual temple Christ is coming to.

Now Jesus, the human Jesus, came to a physical temple, built out of stone, and there was some wood, and some gold, and some other fine stones in it. **But when Christ comes the second time, he is coming in great spiritual power. And he is coming to a spiritual temple. And that spiritual temple is the Church.** And the Church grows into that spiritual temple in the Lord, ‘In whom, you also, are built together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” **In other words, God comes and dwells in each of us, but he also dwells in the Church. Now, he doesn't dwell in two or three churches. I'm going to show you, when we get back here to first Corinthians 12, there is only one Church.”**

Bible Study, “I Corinthians 12”, Herbert W Armstrong

“Now it is speaking about a second, just as a second coming of Christ, a second coming of a messenger to prepare the way before Him. As John the Baptist was the physical messenger in the physical wilderness of Jordan, so there would be a messenger with a message, with **a voice crying out in the spiritual wilderness of the modern Twentieth Century, and the last half of the Twentieth Century, preparing the way for the great spiritual Jesus to come to His spiritual temple. And you are that temple!** A spiritual temple! **You will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, after the dead in Christ rise first, and rise with them to meet Christ in the air as He comes. He's coming to His spiritual temple, and we are that temple,** as you read in the last few verses of the second chapter of Ephesians, to a spiritual temple, and this time to set up the Kingdom of God and to rule.”

Sermon, “Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 17, 1983

### **The Size of the One True Church**

Few would have anticipated the apostasy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And even fewer would have believed that only a fraction of a fraction of those who were in the *Worldwide Church of God* would end up holding fast to all of the truths that were restored to that Church era after the falling of that decade. Those who held fast to these truths gathered together in RCG.

In addition, no one could have guessed that RCG, after about 16 years in existence would defect from the truth and introduce strange and unusual teachings, doctrines that oppose the “original truths” that were restored during the Philadelphia era of the Church. And what is even more ironic is that the majority of the brethren who once understood these truths have not left this compromised group.

And so, after two apostasies, the fraction of a fraction that survived the first apostasy has dwindled even more. But the one true Church of God, the spiritual organism that Christ leads, has never been defined by large numbers. It has always been the vast minority, the little flock, who have continued on and adhered to the truth.

But there are two other beings in the one true Church, and they are God the Father and Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head of only one Church which is the body of Christ. God the Father is the supreme commander of all things, including the Church of God. And this is where they both dwell and this is where they both fellowship, only in the one true Church.

Although there seems to still be some time left, the window of opportunity is quickly closing. It is my sincere hope and prayer that God's spirit will lead and help God's people, those who have been called by God and begotten by His spirit, come together in the unity of the faith:

"Now the word for 'God' in the Hebrew language is 'Elohim'. 'Elohim' is a word like the word 'family', like the word 'church', like the word 'group', or like the word 'team'. **It's more than one person, but making one church, one family, one group, not several groups, but one group. And it might be of four or five people. It might be of four or five thousand people, it all depends.**"

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "Mystery of the Trinity", Herbert W Armstrong

"But He didn't give man the annual holy days until the Church started. And the Church started in two phases. One was the physical material phase of ancient Israel. **And the other is the spiritual phase, which is the Church of God that started with Christ.** And so the annual holy days were given to ancient Israel, and they didn't know the meaning of it.

"God caused me to see that He had ordained these days forever, and they should be kept. And so back **in the year of 1927, I saw that we should keep these annual Sabbath days,** and I said, 'We shall keep them.' **And my wife and I began doing it. However, we couldn't convince anyone else to do it with us. For about seven years, we did it alone by ourselves.** But we didn't know why. We didn't know the meaning. We just knew God commanded it, and we said, 'If God commands it, we're going to obey. We will obey first, and let God show us why later.' So later, God did show us why."

Sermon, "Feast of Trumpets", Herbert W Armstrong, October 1985

"[I Corinthians 1:9] 'God is faithful unto who you were called unto the fellowship of His son Jesus Christ our Lord'. Now in first John, the first chapter, you read that our fellowship is with one another in the Church but also with God the Father and our fellowship is with Christ. **When we come together on the Sabbath in a meeting, we're coming into a meeting with Christ and even with God the Father in spirit.** And they are here, by their spirit. Their spirit is here."

Bible Study, "I Corinthians 1 & 2", Herbert W Armstrong, July 18, 1980

"Brethren, I noticed it during the sermonette, there were all kinds of people just walking around here and there. **Are we in a service of Almighty God, or are we not?** Let's not get up and walk unless it is



absolutely necessary, because we should honor the God who caused us to be here and commanded us to be here for this day.

**“Do you know that our fellowship, when we meet here, is not just with ourselves alone? But in I John, near the end of the New Testament, you read that our fellowship is with Jesus Christ and with God the Father. They, in spirit, are here with us. You know, there are a lot of things that we should realize when we come to a service like this.** It's a very solemn and serious thing. We're coming into the presence of God.”

Sermon, “Are You Ready”, Herbert W Armstrong, October 15, 1981



## Chapter 4

### What Will You Do?

#### What Will You Do?

Some of the final closing comments from Jesus Christ to the Laodicean era of the Church are found in Rev. 3:20. It says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” These are the final words and warning to a doctrinally compromised era. But it is also a final chance to allow Jesus Christ to lead a begotten child of God back to His one true Church, the little flock.

Remember, Jesus Christ promises to lead God’s people back to His sheepfold and to the truth. He is a shepherd and one that cares dearly for His sheep. He also promises that His sheep will be given a little help at the end of the age. And so, the only question that remains now is, “What will you do with this final opportunity?”

“Their attitude, according to verse 16, is lukewarm. They're not on fire. They're not all the way in, and zealous for God. They're not all the way out into the world. They have a lukewarm, watered down approach. Verse 19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent.” So they're going to be rebuked. They're going to be chastened. They're going to be dealt with by God, because he's called them. He loves them as his children, but they're headed the wrong way. **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.” I would just call your attention to one thing. Why is Jesus Christ standing on the outside? Why is he pictured standing on the outside knocking to get in to this particular era?** He says, ‘I'm standing at the door knocking. Open up and I'll come in.’”

Sermon, “History of the True Church”, John Ogwyn, October 27, 1979

**“And I found He always keeps His word and He always keeps His promises.** He promises you're going to be under a curse if you don't do it and He'll keep that promise too. And you wonder why things are going wrong, why you're in so much trouble. Well, we all get into trouble. He doesn't promise you won't get into it. We've always gotten into it and we still do. **But we have a master and a servant and a pastor who is all powerful to bring us out.** Do you? **And we always get delivered from everything and everything always turns out right in the end, absolutely.”**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Hebrew Part 10”, Herbert W Armstrong

“God raised up certain individuals. We find as we go through in Revelation chapter two and three, we find these seven Churches addressed and they're basically, well, there's several applications that are all valid. **Obviously, there is a literal application to the seven Churches that existed at that time, at that day. That's right. There is a historical application. That's not the primary emphasis of the book of Revelation. It is not primarily a book of history. It's a book of prophecy, to show unto his servants, things which must shortly come to pass.**”

“So it is a prophecy that was to begin, at the time, shortly after John wrote, and it wants to continue on down. So we have a prophecy here. Obviously, there is a certain element of this. **We are told to heed what the Spirit says unto the Churches, plural. There are lessons that we can learn from what is said to any specific Church era.** There are characteristics of certain of each of these Churches that is reflected, even in any one congregation, that is reflected in us, and the things that we go through. These various congregations, each typified a particular stage or a particular era of the history and the progression of the Church of God.

“The Church of Jesus Christ said, “I will build and the gates of hell will never prevail against it.” **There will be ups and downs. The people of God will be tried. They will be purged. They will be tested. Some of those of understanding will fall, as he prophesied back in Daniel 11, but they will be helped with a little help, but the Church of God will remain.** So certainly there's an application, a general application to people in God's Church at any given time. But there is also the successive character of this, in the fact that he addresses it in terms of seven distinct Church congregations that were, there was a successive nature, that the letter went from one to the other. So, that I think is the primary prophetic impact of it. I think, very clearly it is.”

Sermon, “The History of the True Church”, John Ogwyn, October 27, 1979

### Conclusion

Brethren of the one true God, the one true Church doctrine was a key truth that was restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church. This truth and all truth originates from God the Father. God the Father then passed down this truth to Jesus Christ, who revealed this doctrine to the apostles, who in turn taught this precious truth to the Church. And the one true Church doctrine was one of the “original truths” that the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church understood, I Cor. 12:12-13.

The binding element, the glue that keeps the one true Church united as the one true Church is the unity of the faith, Eph 13:14. The unity of the faith simply means united as one Church in truth. And when the Church is united in the true teachings that come from God the Father, the Church is bonded together and they become one with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

It is true that the Church of God has had a history of being scattered. And the 2 reasons that have caused the Church to scatter are the persecution that has come from the civil governments of the world and the apostasies that have originated from within the Church itself. But after an apostasy occurs, and a faithful minister begins to hold fast to and adhere to the “original truths” once more, God’s people will unite because it is the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ that will lead those who have His spirit back to the spiritual organism is found which is the one true Church.

And after the Church begins to unite in truth, those who choose not to gather together in the unity of the faith will remain as “Loner Christians”, outside of the body of Christ. Mr. Armstrong came to understand that God’s people need a Church and that the almighty God only works through the Church and that it is necessary to have a Church.

The one true Church of God has now dwindled even more after the latest apostasy that recently occurred in RCG. The Church of God can be composed of 5 or 6 individuals or it can be composed of thousands of spirit begotten brethren who are united in truth. But no matter the size, those who are united in truth are ultimately united in truth and with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

The following are final words that Jesus Christ leaves to a Church era that is compromised in truth and that is scattered into various groups and Loner individuals at the end of the age are these, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” These words are not indicative of a God that wants His people to remain separated or scattered at the end.

Brethren of the one true God, we are all free moral agents, free to choose between truth and error and free to decide our own fate. A final excerpt from Mr. Armstrong is in order. These final words from him could not be more appropriate for the perilous time that we are now in. May God help everyone to heed the final words that you will now read:

“Do you know where we are right now, IN PROPHECY?

“We are in the very time of Daniel's prophecy: At ‘the time of the end, many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand’ (Daniel 12:9-10).

“God's people are in the time of final trying and testing — like taking final exams to determine whether we graduate.

**“Today some in the Church of God do not UNDERSTAND just what the Church of God really IS! Some have become confused as to whether there is ORGANIZATION or government in it — and I mean in GOD'S OWN CHURCH! And God HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH! (I Cor. 12:12, 13.) But we of ‘the wise’ shall understand! That understanding shall be made PLAIN in this letter.”**

Co-worker letter, Herbert W Armstrong, May 2, 1974

*With sincerity and love  
And in Christ's service,*



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