

# **Where is the One True Church *NOW*?**

## **It's Key Characteristics**



## Preface

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> document that has been written in the wake of an apostasy. All 10 articles contain numerous quotes from a faithful apostle Mr. Armstrong or quotes from the various books, booklets, magazines, sermons, etc. that were produced by the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by the apostle just mentioned. All underlining, bolding and highlighting have been added for emphasis.

The reason these documents are written this way is so that those who read them can verify and prove for themselves that these were the ***original truths*** that were restored to the Church through the man that fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah and who served as a faithful apostle. And this man was Herbert W Armstrong. These are the ***original truths*** that were restored to the Church during the Philadelphia era and they are the same truths that the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church of God received from the apostles:

“John the Baptist was a baptizer not a teacher. But Jesus said after John the Baptist had come and gone, that Elijah would yet come before the second coming of Christ and before the Day of the Lord. Has anything been restored? **The original truth that was lost has been restored to this Church.**”

Sermon “Unleavened Bread”, Herbert W Armstrong, 1984

**“I am going to call for GOD'S CHURCH TO GET BACK TO THE ORIGINAL CHANGELESS TRUTHS — for TRUTH is the SAME, yesterday, today and forever!**

“Some ministers, whom I have not taught directly — who have come along since I was able to continue personally teaching the Bible courses in college — have been tending to want to WATER DOWN God's precious TRUTH — to see how close to SATAN'S WAYS they can get and STILL make it into God's Kingdom.”

*Good News Magazine*, “What You May Not Know!”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 28, 1978

**“Jude had become aware of the great need to earnestly appeal to Christians to contend or fight for the faith which had been delivered to them. Apostasy was fast setting in; men were turning to error and leading away disciples after themselves.** The Church was being divided.

“What Is the Faith?”

**“Let's note carefully the meaningful words Jude used. 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 first-hand — 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)."

*Good News Magazine*, "The Faith Once and for All Delivered", August 1974

These are the truths that God the Father gave Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ in turn restored them to the Philadelphia era of the Church through his faithful apostle, Mr. Armstrong. This is why Christ can say that this era "has kept My word" in Revelation 3:8 and 10. So even though you will be reading quotes from Mr. Armstrong's or quotes from the material that was produced during the *Worldwide Church of God*, you are truly hearing the word of truth which is the word of God the Father which is also the voice of Jesus Christ, John 17:17 and John 12:49.

**"Let's SET THIS STRAIGHT, once and for all! The SOURCE of the beliefs, teaching, customs and practices in the Church of God is GOD HIMSELF! Not any man. Jesus said 'I have spoken nothing of myself' — the FATHER had instructed Him! Jesus, in turn, taught His apostles in Person!**

"THERE WAS NO DOCTRINAL BOARD! The teachings of the Church did not come from a COUNCIL of ministers and/or lay members, who voted on what to believe."

*Good News Magazine*, "How Christ Gives The Church Its Beliefs", Herbert W Armstrong, November 20, 1978

**"Two can't walk together except they be AGREED! I now AGREED with Christ.** I have NEVER DISAGREED. You yourself—every begotten child of God—does, through human weakness, commit sin even after the most deep conversion. None has lived perfectly but JESUS. But when I stumbled through human weakness, Jesus picked me back up on confessing to Him and repenting, and asking help never to repeat the sin. **At no point did I DISAGREE nor water down HIS TRUTH.** He used me in building the Philadelphia era of HIS CHURCH—and in proclaiming His Gospel IN ALL THE WORLD!"

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

I began this endeavor about a year after we left the *Restored Church of God* (RCG). We left due to the many doctrinal changes that have occurred there. These changes began in 2015 with a 3 part sermons series that changed a key teaching, it altered the truth that Mr. Armstrong had fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah. And soon afterward, a sermon series titled "The Greatest Untold Story" (TGUS) began and it changed a plethora of truths that had been restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong.

RCG now claims to have "moved on", meaning move away from the original truths that it once adhered to, which were the same truths that were restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church through Mr. Armstrong. I

was hopeful that an evangelist or a high ranking minister would rise to the occasion and stand up for these truths after TGUS sermon series took root in RCG, but no one ever did.

I search the Churches of God for the Church that was adhering to the original truths but I could not find a viable group. Some of these groups have altered, discarded or watered down many of these truths. Other groups have been formed by ministers who were removed, disfellowshipped or left the Church for reasons other than the truth and thus, are in no position to lead God's people. And then there are a few groups that never placed the proper emphasis on the preaching of the gospel.

We left RCG in the spring of 2019. I was still hopeful that a minister or ministers would rise to the occasion and restore the original truth and gather God's people, but to this day, this has not happen and it seems highly unlikely that a minister will appear and complete this mission this late into the final era of the Church.

And so, It became obvious that there was no place to go and that there was no "knight in shining armor" on the horizon that was going to stand up for the precious original truths. I felt responsible and I also felt guilty for not doing anything as I watched God's people being filled with doctrinal confusion and others falling away from the truth.

It is the duty of all true shepherds, no matter their rank, to warn the sheep of the danger they are in when an apostasy happens in the Church. This is a responsibility that all true shepherds have, it is a Biblical command, and it is also what Mr. Armstrong taught was the God given duty of all true ministers, John 10:10-14. This includes protecting the sheep, caring for them, keeping them in the truth, and gathering them in a time of scattering, Luke 11:23 and Matthew 12:30.

And so, it is my hope that the information contained in this article and in the documents that have previously been written will keep God's people in the truth. It is now late in the 7<sup>th</sup> era of the Church. There will be a group, the one true Church which is synonymous with the body of Christ that will be alive to meet Christ in the air as the bride of Christ when he returns, I Thessalonians 4:15-17. Therefore, it is not a matter of whether this united body of Christ will exist at the end of the age, but it is a matter of where it will be found:

**"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.”**

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

# *Table of Contents*

CHAPTER ONE – THE HISTORIC GOAL TO DESTROY THE CHURCH .....	7
CHAPTER TWO – THE ONE TRUE CHURCH IN THE LAODICEAN ERA .....	12
CHAPTER THREE – WHERE IS THE ONE TRUE CHURCH <i>NOW</i> ? .....	39
CHAPTER FOUR – HOLDING FAST TO THE “ORIGINAL TRUTHS” .....	58

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE HISTORIC GOAL TO DESTROY THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

### Introduction

“Where is the one true Church, the body of Christ?” often becomes the question when a defection from the truth happens in the Church. But apostasies are nothing new in the history of the Church. Its past is riddled with the struggles of brethren contending for the faith after being led astray with false doctrines by leaders who arose from within the Church.

This article is intended help God’s people find their way back home to the one true Church, the body of Christ, after a defection from the truth has occurred. You will hear from a faithful apostle as he expounds on several key points and identifying characteristics that will be present in the one true Church. These points and characteristics are intended to help God’s people find the one true Church, the Church that Jesus Christ is leading, at the end of the age:

“Now some of them did fall, some of them did fall away. And the devil has always been angry, wroth with that Church that keep the commandments of God and has the faith and the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17). And I want to tell you my friends, that that little Church, that despised, scattered, persecuted little Church of God has had a great deal more to contend with than those that just join the broad way that is leading to destruction, the popular road of organized religion.

Because the devil is angry with them and the devil has caused them a great deal of trouble, where he's perfectly content to let alone those that are deceived. Brethren of God, this is why it is important the identifying characteristics of the one true Church. Without understanding this key trait, it will become virtually impossible to find the body of Christ.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “History of the True Church – Part 6” Herbert W Armstrong

### The Historic Goal to Destroy the Church

But before we begin to study the characteristics of the one true Church, all of God’s people must be aware of the historic goal to destroy the Church of God. The attempt to destroy the one true Church began as early as the first century. The epistles that were written by the 1<sup>st</sup> century apostles contain these accounts.

The efforts to destroy the one true Church often begin with a defection from the truth, and it frequently starts from within, from inside the Church of God. The following are just some of the many warnings that God’s faithful apostle thundered to the Church on this subject before he died:



“It’s been almost a year since I’ve been here, around 11 months. And since then, this Church has really been getting back on the track. **At that time, I said something about Satan being ready to strike at this Church and he is always ready to strike at this Church. He wants to destroy this Church.** He’s not interested in destroying the Churches of this world or the Churches of traditional Christianity. **He wants to destroy the Church of God**”

Sermon, “Back On Track”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 12, 1981

“The world looks on such events occurring in any church as evidence of corruption or wrongdoing or something wrong and reprehensible in the church. Worldly clubs, societies or churches do not generally seem to have such troubles or controversies. Satan does not bother them. They are already on his side, but **Satan seeks to destroy God's one and only true church.**”

*The Worldwide News*, “Recent History of the Worldwide Church of God”, Herbert W Armstrong, 1985

**“Now I’ve shown you how Christ Himself foretold apostasy,** false preachers accepting His name, proclaiming His person, coming in His name saying Jesus is the Christ, and yet deceiving the world, **and how New Testament prophecies foretold apostasies.** How the apostle Paul said the mystery of iniquity did already work in His time in His day in II Thessalonians the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter...

**“Jesus and the apostles foretold not a universal widespread growth of the New Testament Church but rather a falling away from the truth on the part of a majority not just the few.** Jesus called His Church the little flock. It was prophesied all through the Bible and in the New Testament that the little flock, the true Church, would be scattered.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Apostasy”, Herbert W Armstrong

### **False Gospels**

A few decades after the Church began in 31 AD, a false gospel took root in one of its congregations. It took root in a congregation that was located in area of Galatia, Galatians 1:6-9. But it was more than the true gospel that was affected and that changed, it was the truth itself, as the apostle Paul further explained in Galatians 3:1.

The subtle introduction of a false gospel is but one way that the Church can be led astray. It has been used in the past in God’s Church and it should be no surprise if it is used again in our time. And even ministers from within the Church can be deceived into believing, accepting and teaching a false gospel. It is almost inconceivable that this could happen, but it has. Mr. Armstrong understood this fact very well:

“But soon, the numbers in the Church grew by MULTIPLICATION, no longer mere addition: ‘And in those days, when the number of the disciples was MULTIPLIED, ...’ (Acts 6:1).

"The Gospel was GOING OUT! These thousands of brethren coming in were either carrying out the Gospel, or backing those who did. And WHAT GOSPEL? The Gospel GOD SENT BY JESUS -- the Gospel of the Kingdom of God -- which is both the FAMILY of God and the GOVERNMENT of God. (Mark 1:1, 14-15, Acts 1:3, etc., etc.) Philip went to Samaria proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD. (Acts 8:5, 12.) Paul proclaimed the KINGDOM OF GOD. (Acts 20:25, 28:23, 31.)

**"But SATAN now influenced a great PERSECUTION against the Church to STOP the proclaiming of the KINGDOM OF GOD. He knows that Kingdom will remove him from the earth and from deceiving the world into accepting him as the god of this world. (Acts 8:1.)"**

Letter to the brethren, Herbert W Armstrong, March 18, 1974

"Satan sent into the Church 'wolves in sheep's clothing' (Matthew 7:15). **Even of ministers in the Church, Satan influenced some to try to destroy the Church and the PROCLAIMING OF THE GOSPEL.** Paul, meeting with the ELDERS of the Ephesus Church, to whom he preached the KINGDOM OF GOD (Acts 20:25) said, 'For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock. **Also of your own selves (the MINISTERS) shall men arise, speaking perverse things,** to draw away disciples after them' (verses 29-30).

**"Writing to the Church at Corinth Paul feared lest, as Satan beguiled Eve through his 'subtlety,' their minds should be poisoned against the TRUTH, and proclaiming the Gospel TO THE WORLD (II Cor. 11:3), being deceived by a DIFFERENT GOSPEL, a DIFFERENT SPIRIT (of discouragement, confusion, doubt, bitterness). This was the work of SATAN, working through human MINISTERS – probably SINCERE MEN, not realizing they were DECEIVED!"**

Letter to the brethren, Herbert W Armstrong, March 18, 1974

Satan wanted to destroy it. WHY? Because this world is Satan's world. He sits on the throne of this world (Isa. 14:13). And the Church of God will fill the earth after Satan is deposed and his world destroyed. Christ, the Head of the Church, will take over Satan's throne as world ruler.

**"So, when Satan failed to prevent the Church from being founded and getting off to a glorious start, what did he do next? He deceived certain humans into seeking to destroy the Church from within. There's a saying, 'If you can't defeat them, join them.' He caused some within the Church to turn to a false and counterfeit gospel."**

"In Galatians 1:6-7, we read that the churches in Galatia had turned to 'another gospel.' They had believed those who began to proclaim 'another Jesus' (II Cor. 11:4). These false ministers professing to be ministers of Christ were in fact ministers of Satan (verses 13-15).

“Thus, through false brethren within the Church, Satan succeeded at that time in deceiving even the vast majority in the Church. He succeeded in turning this majority into a growing false and counterfeit church.

*Plain Truth Magazine*, “Where Is the True Church?”, Herbert W Armstrong, June-July 1982

### **God’s Word Cannot Be Broken**

But there is wonderful news. Jesus Christ said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18). And Mr. Armstrong understood this fact very well. He expected that the one true Church would exist at the end of the age and that the members of the body of Christ would be physically alive to meet Christ in the air at His return. This promise is found in Revelation 3:10, Revelation 12:14 and I Thessalonians 4:15-17. The following is what Mr. Armstrong stated regarding the existence of the one true Church at the end of the age:

**“GOD ALMIGHTY brought me back from DEATH! He brought me back, not only to FINISH carrying His Gospel of the Kingdom of God into all the world, but also BECAUSE HIS CHURCH WAS NOT ‘HOLY, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLES OR ANY SUCH THING.’”**

**“Just as sure as He set Zerubbabel to build the physical second temple to which Christ came 1,900 years ago, so He has raised me up to build His SPIRITUAL TEMPLE — the Household of God, ‘which groweth unto an HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD.’ And it MUST BE MADE READY for the MARRIAGE when Christ returns, AND WE HAVEN’T MUCH TIME!”**

*The Worldwide News*, “And Now – Christ Sets Church On God’s Organizational Track”, Herbert W Armstrong, April 23, 1979

**“At Christ’s Second Coming, what happens to the CHURCH? Those dead ‘in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:16-17). And where shall we be WITH Him? Where shall HE be? ‘His feet shall stand in that day (of His coming) on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem’ (Zech. 14:4). The Church, caught up to meet Him in the air as He is COMING, those who have died will be raised immortal. But we, if still alive, shall ‘be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye’...and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed’ to spirit GOD PERSONS (I Cor. 15:51-52). In that CHANGED, glorified SPIRIT immortal condition, we shall be the T E M P L E far more glorious than was Solomon’s temple!”**

CoWorker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, March 19, 1981

### **The One True Church**

In order to find the one true Church, it is prudent to begin with an example of a Church that once met this description. Fortunately, there is a Church that we know for certain that met this criteria, and that we still

have a tremendous amount of documentation on its teachings. And this Church of God once qualified as the one true Church.

The Philadelphia era of the Church of God was that Church. It was alive and well and it thrived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of its wonderful traits are described in Revelation 3:7-11. It was first known as the *Radio Church of God* and later became known as the *Worldwide Church of God*. And it was led by Mr. Herbert W Armstrong from 1934 until his death in 1986.

It is this era of the Church that took the form of the one true Church. The description given by Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:7-11 of this era of the Church should leave no doubt that this era was doctrinally on track and that it is the blue print for the one true Church. Therefore, it is the example of this era, as well as several Biblical truths that were revealed to the Church through Mr. Armstrong on this subject, that will yield the identifying characteristics of the ONE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD:

**“Well now, today we are celebrating not only the 50th anniversary of the local Eugene Church as it was, which was the first Church of the Philadelphia era.** I was still working with and preaching in the Sardis Churches up in the Willamette Valley, up near Jefferson, over in a little country schoolhouse at Beaver, up in that direction. **But God began to reveal NEW TRUTH that the others didn't know ...”**

Sermon, “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eugene Church”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 24, 1983

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE ONE TRUE CHURCH IN THE LAODICEAN ERA

### The Philadelphia Era Kept the Truth

The Philadelphia era was a vibrant era that was blessed in many ways by God. Christ had many wonderful and positive things to say about this era. One of those nice things is that this era kept the word of Christ, Revelation 3:8 and 10. And since the word of Christ is the word of God, which is the truth, John 12:49 and John 17:17, there can be no doubt that the Philadelphia era of the Church kept the word of Christ which is the original truth:

“And your living by every word of God, as you diligently study that word and as you pray earnestly, continuously to God that He will open it to your understanding that you will understand and realize that **the Bible is the revelation of God. It is revealed truth, the way of life.** It’s revealed to show you how to live. And you live by it, every single thing that you can find in the Bible and by its principles.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Christ is the Head of the Church”, Herbert W Armstrong

“But when you come to the Bible, my friends they don’t read it like any other book. Now do you know why? There is a reason. **Everyone has to try to change the Bible and try to pretend that it doesn’t say what it does but says what he wants to make it say and that is his interpretation.** That’s where we get interpretations. Now the Bible shouldn’t be interpreted. Some say, now Mr. Armstrong, what is your interpretation. I say I don’t have any. That’s my reply.

**“I accept the interpretation of Jesus Christ. He’s the author of the Bible.** He’s the divine architect of the Bible and the plans and the blue print of the life we should be living and that we should be building and we should be working according to the plans and blue print.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “The True Church Part 1”, Herbert W Armstrong

**“And, beginning in the fall of A.D. 1927, God began an absolutely UNIQUE WORK on the one the living Christ had chosen to be His apostle.** He put me through the wringer that squeezed out all former misconcepts and untrue beliefs, **using me to put His TRUTH into His Church** that is to rise and meet the glorified Christ in the clouds as He returns to establish the Kingdom of God!

“The END TIME has come! **God has restored original TRUTH! How PRECIOUS is IT TO YOU?** — or do you trample it underfoot as swine would trample into the mud the most precious diamonds, rubies and precious stones, and go for the slop?”

*Good News Magazine*, “How Satan Injects False Doctrines”, Herbert W Armstrong

## The Falling Away of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

After the death of Mr. Armstrong, the new leadership that gripped the Church defected from the truth and a falling away followed. Pagan doctrines were introduced by those in charge of the Church. This was a devastating event that would see the majority of the membership of the *Worldwide Church of God* leave the truth altogether. And this was the event that sparked a new era, the Laodicean era of the Church.

A smaller minority of Church would survive this apostasy. But this group that survived did not gather together as one, they did not all assemble in the original truth that was restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong. Instead a large number of smaller groups formed, each holding on to varying degrees of truth, and others would mix error with truth.

### Why Does God Allow Apostasies to Happen

Some have asked, “Why would God allow heresy, false teachers, and false prophets to infiltrate the one true Church? Why does God allow apostasies to happen?” Although God allows these things to happen, He is not the author of it. But He allows it to happen as a test for His people. It is a way that He can know whether we will follow the truth, and thus the living HEAD of the Church, Jesus Christ, no matter the consequences:

**“Why does God allow wolves to have access to His flock? Why doesn't He expose them before they do any harm? He has His reasons!”**

“The first and most basic scripture about false prophets explains why. ‘If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: **for the Lord your God proveth you**, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul’ (Deut. 13:1-3).

**“God wants his flock to stay with Him and the truth no matter what.”**

*Good News Magazine, “Beware of False Prophets”, May 1979*

A test such as this is meant to reveal ones loyalty to the one true God. It is intended to establish ones faithfulness to His Creator. And it is designed to develop the gold in ones character that can only come from a trial such as this. But this will only happen if we “earnestly contends for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”, which are the truths that were established during the Philadelphia era of Church (Revelation 3:8 & 10).

## The Birth of the Laodicean Era

The candlestick moved from the 6<sup>th</sup> era to the 7<sup>th</sup> era of the Church shortly after the death of Mr. Armstrong. The 7<sup>th</sup> era is picture as having many problems. This is an incredible shift from the description that is given of the Philadelphia era. So what caused the shift in a Church era that once kept the truth? It was the loss of a key doctrinal teaching. The Laodicean era lost the understanding that truth enters the Church through apostles. This key truth was restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong.

Once this truth was discarded, the Church of God ceased to speak the same thing and it became divided. Many groups formed, each with varying versions of the truth. The leaders in these groups began to pick and choose which doctrines they wanted their group to believe and which doctrines they wanted to change or discard. And some even introduced new doctrines that oppose the original truths. And the end result was blindness, confusion, and division which has only continued to get worse:

**“We are commanded to all speak the same thing.** Now that thing must come from God and not from the desires of men. You agree with that or do some of you think it should be the desires of men contrary to God...

**“Now if everybody teaches what he believes and the way he sees it, well have nothing but terrible confusion in the Church. Our teachings and doctrines must come from God. And how does that happen? Well God shows it to Christ and then Christ puts it in the Church and I am going to show you how...**

**“All of the doctrine, all of what we believe, all of what the Church believed 1900 years ago, was put into the Church by the apostles.** They got some of it from the prophets. But it was put in by the apostles. That’s why the Church is on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and Christ the chief corner stone.

“Now Christ had taught them directly. But Jesus Christ is the Word of God in person. And Christ’s apostle today got the same truth from the Word of God in print.”

World Tomorrow Telecast, “How Truth is Revealed”, Herbert W Armstrong

**“You take one such false step, accept one false ‘truth’** and refuse to REPENT of it at once, and turn from it, **you will then go into more and more error.**

“For 54 years now, I have seen this happen — all too often to those I have loved. If people mourn and weep over a loved one who dies, HOW MUCH MORE have I had to MOURN and suffer over the SPIRITUAL loss of a brother or sister in God's Church!

“Let me illustrate. One is walking along in a thickly wooded forest on a moonless pitch-dark night. But just ahead of him is an experienced guide with a lighted lantern. If he follows that lighted lantern, he will be led safely out of the woods. But if he turns aside a step or two and hesitates, the light continues

on out of his sight. Then he is really lost. **If one turns aside from God's truth on just one point, or one doctrine, and does not quickly repent, the light of God's truth moves on.** In his self-centered effort to find the light of truth, he now walks blindly in wrong directions. He takes more and more steps in the wrong direction. **That is, he proceeds into more and more error, all the while losing more and more of what truth he had.**

**"God's Word, the Holy Bible, is 'a lamp unto our feet' to guide us out of the darkness of error and into the daylight brightness of TRUTH. The oil that produces the light in the lamp or lantern, causing it to light up to our understanding, is the Holy Spirit** (of Psalms 119:105, Matthew 25:1-13).

**"In other words, if you reject one point of truth, or take one step aside into one point of error — unless you repent immediately and get back to the light — you will take more and more steps into erroneous beliefs, and one by one give up the points of TRUTH you had seen and accepted."**

*The Worldwide News, "Satan Deceive And Use Me? – Never!", Herbert W Armstrong*

### **A Description of Laodicea**

A few things happened in the groups that formed after the apostasy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first thing that occurred was that many of the truths that were restored to the Church by Christ through his faithful apostle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were altered, removed, watered down, and in some cases, some of these truths were replaced by false doctrines. The following are a few descriptions of this age:

"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 of God."

*The Worldwide News, "War Is Still On, Says Mr. Armstrong", Herbert W Armstrong, March 12, 1979*

"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!



“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. Then my son fell under the influence of a group of liberals, with whom he surrounded himself. He began to DISAGREE with Church doctrines more and more! AND GOD WITHDREW HIS BLESSING!”

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

“Now, of this church God says, ‘I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot [here is the lukewarm church]. I would [that] thou were cold or hot [**now here are people that know the truth, here are people that think that they have everything spiritually that they could want**]. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth [says Jesus Christ]. Because thou sayest [this is what the people of this church think] because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods’ (Revelation 3:15-16).

“In other words, spiritually rich, ‘We have knowledge that the people have not had before.’ You know at the end time knowledge is to increase and the wise are to understand but none of the wicked would understand. If these people were not people that were obedient to God and that had repented of their sin, which is the transgression of God's laws, of God's rule, God's sovereignty, they would not be His church. **These are commandment keeping people or they wouldn't be called the Church of God in the first place. But these are the lukewarm commandment keepers. These are the people that have known the truth.**”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “History of the True Church - Part 7”, Herbert W Armstrong

### **The 10 Key Characteristics of the One True Church**

Now that you have seen a glimpse of what Mr. Armstrong expected the Laodicean era to look like, you will now see a picture of what the one true Church looks like. This picture will become more and more clear as we study each individual characteristic that this Church is depicted as having.

The list that has been compiled is intended to help God's people determine the location of the one true Church after the apostasy in the *Worldwide Church of God*. This list is not intended to be a complete list or an all inclusive list, but it is meant to contain enough of the characteristics that will be helpful in finding the location of where the one true Church existed after the death of Mr. Armstrong.

We will begin by providing a summary of the 10 identifying characteristics. And then, we will see the Biblical truth on each point expounded upon by Mr. Armstrong using the material that is still available from the Philadelphia era of the Church. It is important to remember that these are not the only characteristics of the one true Church, but they are enough for anyone who is sincerely looking for the one true Church to be able to use them to identify the location of where the body of Christ existed after the death of Mr. Armstrong:

1. **Ekklesia** – The one true Church is composed of those who are “called out” of this world and who are begotten by the spirit of God. These are the members who are converted and are living the way life described as the way of love, of give, and of outgoing concern for others.
2. **The Preaching of the Gospel was to Continue After the Death of Mr. Armstrong** – Mr. Armstrong was absolutely clear that the preaching of the gospel was to continue even in the event of his death. Therefore, the one true Church would have continued this commission into the Laodicean era.
3. **Having One’s Heart in the Work** – The preaching of the gospel is a vital element in the life of a true Christian. Therefore, the one true Church will have a membership whose heart is in the work of God.
4. **The True Gospel** – The gospel that was restored to the Church by Christ through Mr. Armstrong was the gospel of the kingdom of God. This message does not include Jesus Christ who was the messenger of this amazing message.
5. **The Apostles are Commissioned with Preaching the Gospel** – A vital truth that was restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church was that it was the apostles who were given the commission of preaching the gospel to the world, Matthew 28:16-20. An apostle is one who is “sent forth” with the gospel. The conversions that occur as a result of this commission are the “seal” or fruits of an apostle, I Corinthians 9:1-2. Therefore, the truth that was restored to the Church is that the preaching of the gospel requires the presence or eventual presence of an apostle or at the very least, an ordained evangelist.
6. **The Role of the Membership** – The role of the membership is to support and back up the apostle as he takes the gospel to the world. This is accomplished with the tithes, offerings, prayers etc. that come from the members who are living the way of give and are sincerely concerned for mankind.
7. **The Pattern** – A pattern was established by Mr. Armstrong during the Philadelphia era of the Church on how the gospel is taken to the world. This pattern included a flagship magazine, audio and video productions, and personal meetings with heads of state. In addition, a Headquarters campus was built, a college was established, and a vast amount of literature was written that explained the restored truths and that supported the 1<sup>st</sup> commission.

8. **There is Only One Church** – Only one Church can exist at any single point in time. Since the *Worldwide Church of God* was the one true Church when it was led by Mr. Armstrong, any splinter that formed while Mr. Armstrong led the Church cannot qualify as the one true Church.
9. **The Original Truth** – Jesus Christ restored the original truth to the *Worldwide Church of God* through Mr. Armstrong. This was the same truth the Jesus Christ taught the apostles during the 1<sup>st</sup> century who in turn taught the Church. The original truth is a hallmark that will be found in tact in the one true Church.
10. **The Messenger to the Church Eras** – Messages to the seven Church eras are found in Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. These messages depict 7 dominant conditions that would exist in 7 successive Church eras. A truth that was restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong is that each era has a human leader, a messenger that is selected by God to lead and deliver a message to each era.

### **Characteristic # 1** **Ekklesia**

When I was in the *Worldwide Church of God*, I remember learning that the word Church did not mean a building or a structure where people met for services. I remember learning that the Greek word for Church was “ekklesia” and that this word means “those that are called out”. Therefore, the first key characteristic of the one true Church is that the one true Church will be composed of those individuals that have been called out of this world and placed in the Church by Jesus Christ.

These are individuals who are being led by the spirit of God. I remember noticing that the brethren in the congregation that I attended services with were different. They were joyful, and many of them were living the way of outgoing concern for others and the way of give. There were a number of wonderful Christian examples in the *Worldwide Church of God*.

Therefore, the first and the most important component of the one true Church stems from the meaning of the word Church. It should be noted that there is a vast difference between the meaning of the word Church and the meaning of the one true Church which is synonymous with the body of Christ. The Church are the individual spirit begotten members, and they are one component of the one true Church, but they are not the only component of the one true Church. Mr. Armstrong always identified, as you will soon come to see, the one true Church which is the body of Christ, with additional characteristics:

“The New Testament of the Bible originally was written in the Greek language. **The English word church is translated from the original Greek word ekklesia. It means ‘called out ones’** - from *ek* (out), and *klesia* (called). The Greek word means ‘a calling out’ to meet together, especially as a religious

congregation. It does not mean a building with sharply sloping roof, with a steeple atop pointing to heaven, with a cross on its facade.”

Booklet, *Where is the True Church?*, Herbert W Armstrong, 1984

**“Now the true Church then are those individuals that are begotten of God and led by His holy spirit. I mean really led by the spirit and not led by other people, they are not led by tradition, they are not led by the crowd, they’re not conformed to this world, they have come out of this world and they are separate. Jesus said that His Church would be those that come out of world.”**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “The True Church Part 1”, Herbert W Armstrong

It should be noted, as an important side commentary, that there was nothing special about us when God called us. Most of us had very little going for us and in many cases, we were in need of the most help, I Corinthians 1:26 and Mark 2:17. God looked down on each and every one of us and in his abundant mercy and loving grace, decided to give us a chance and work with us. But we were called with a mission, to adhere to the full truth and to build character. May we never forget this important fact in the life of our calling:

“But by 1926, just when my new advertising business was beginning to accelerate, another nationwide occurrence, not of my making — or even my knowledge, at the time — wiped out that business.

“Once again the SELF was deflated. The ego was punctured. I took a new look at myself. And what I now saw was pretty humiliating. **I called myself a burned-out ‘hunk of junk.’** I felt unworthy to be cast onto a junk pile. At this point a soul-jarring experience and a new self-appraisal resulted in a total about-face. I had been hit a jolt that changed the direction of my life.”

*Plain Truth Magazine*, “Why I was Important in My Own Eyes”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 1969

## Characteristic # 2

### The Preaching of the Gospel *Was* to Continue After the Death of Mr. Armstrong?

The most wonderful news that the world will ever hear is the good news of a soon coming kingdom that will bring peace and happiness and salvation to this earth. The kingdom of God is a government that will be established on the earth that will end all of the suffering, all of the injustices and all of the horrible things that now plague this world and it will establish a utopian place on the earth.

The work of God, which is the preaching of this incredible wonderful news, was a top priority in the life of Mr. Armstrong. Even in the final years of his life, he did everything within his power to announce the only real hope for mankind, which is gospel of the kingdom of God. He dedicated his life to accomplishing this goal because he was truly concerned for mankind. And he made sure that the Church understood that it was to continue the 1<sup>st</sup> commission, even in the event of his death.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> identifying characteristic of the true Church of God. It will be found announcing the gospel of the kingdom of God to the world. This is yet another component, but not the only component, of the one true Church. The following are Mr. Armstrong's written words before he died on this important commission:

"Until the present moment I felt that God might provide a way for complete recovery, and he still may. So I have withheld this statement until now, but I feel it is better that you all know the condition. I am now in my 94th year. God may grant that I continue in this very limited manner to direct the work for some time, but the occasional severe heart pains that I have endured have made me feel the necessity of letting our co-workers know of the condition as it is.

**"Remember, this is the work of the living Creator God.** We are now very near the end of this present age. I will continue to give my all to the work of God up to the last breath. I hope you will all realize the seriousness of the time in which we live and that nothing is important any longer other than to be close to God and assured of a place in his very soon-coming Kingdom.

"This world is not God's world, and of that we may all be thankful. It is now in its very last days. This illness has impressed heavily on my mind, more than ever before, the uselessness of this present evil world. Thank God we are all very near to its end. And closer to God's wonderful world tomorrow. I thank you, beyond words to express, for your loving concern and for the many thousands of cards and well wishes that have been coming in from great numbers of you from all over the world.

**"I thank God that he has organized this present work of his so thoroughly that regardless of the outcome of my present illness, the work will continue right on to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.** Meanwhile, dear brethren and co-workers, I and the work of God, need, as never before, your continued fervent prayers for the continued progress of this great work. Christ is the Living Head of this work, and He will continue guiding those He has chosen right up to His Second Coming, which grows daily nearer at hand."

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, December 23, 1985

"This is my first letter to you in 1986, and could very well be my last. Now in my 94th year I am in a very physically weakened state enduring severe pain and with virtually no strength whatsoever. I briefly described my condition in last month's co-worker letter to you, and now it has worsened. **It may be that the Work God has given me to do is complete, but not the Work of God's Church, which will be faithfully doing God's Work till Christ, the True Head of this Church, returns.**"

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, January 10, 1986

"Brethren, this world is being destroyed for lack of knowledge of and from GOD, as we read in Hosea 4:6. **Through my personal visits, and the PLAIN TRUTH magazine, on TV and radio and through other literature, we are proclaiming that knowledge in POWER and AUTHORITY. Some listen. It is God's last witness against those who do not. BUT WE MUST DRIVE RIGHT ON UNTIL CHRIST COMES!**

“More than ever I need your earnest prayers. God's great Work needs your generous support. And YOU need the great matchless blessing that comes from having YOUR PART in such a wonderful Work.”

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, November 18, 1984

### Characteristic # 3 Having One's Heart in the Work

You have just seen a glimpse of the dedication that God's 20<sup>th</sup> century apostle had in accomplishing the 1<sup>st</sup> commission. He placed a great emphasis on preaching of the true gospel to the world because he cared immensely for mankind. And he often stressed how crucial it was for every member in the Church to do their part and to have their heart in work of the living God.

Those who have their heart in the work often have an outgoing concern for others. Mr. Armstrong was able to see that these members are often the ones who care deeply for their fellow man. And thus, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> key characteristic that will be found in the one true Church:

“In my over forty-six years' intensive, rich, active experience, since God changed MY direction into HIS WAY, I have observed that the *very first* need of every Christian, who is to GROW and develop this spiritual character, is to have his heart completely in THE WORK OF GOD, which the *living* Christ has called His servants to do, as His instruments! Our ‘WORKS’ are our part in GOD'S WORK getting His true Gospel to the whole world as a witness preparing the way for Christ's coming. We are merely His INSTRUMENTS. It is GOD'S WORK! Those who condemn ‘WORKS’ are condemning the Great GOD who is the actual DOER *through us* as His instruments and Co-Workers! It is not, after all, *our* works!

“Those who are self-centered, caring nothing for the WORK OF GOD, having not enough *outgoing concern* to want to help GET CHRIST'S MESSAGE out to this blinded, deceived, dying world, fall away. Those who center their whole ‘Christian’ life and activity on developing *their own selves* spiritually, whose hearts are not in or concerned about this great OUTGOING worldwide WORK OF GOD, actually directed by the *living* CHRIST, develop only INWARDLY, until they shrivel up spiritually and fall by the wayside! Those whose hearts, their active, constant, earnest, fervent PRAYERS, and their tithes and offerings are in GOD'S WORK continue to EXPAND spiritually – they become HAPPIER - they become greatly BLESSED – their lives become richer and fuller - and their faces beam in smiles. They RADIATE! They PROSPER!”

Booklet, *What will you be doing in the NEXT LIFE?*, Herbert W Armstrong

“Brethren, if we are to continue to grow—and to grow SPIRITUALLY as well as in numbers—we must remember that the PURPOSE of the Church is, first, to GO INTO ALL THE WORLD and preach Christ's GOSPEL. The FIRST commission to the Church is just that. Anyone who looks on that Great commission of Christ as ‘Armstrong's private work’ is just not a member of GOD'S Church. Anyone who does not have his whole heart in that work IS NOT A MEMBER OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH, and has no right whatsoever to attend or fellowship in any of its local congregations.”

## **Characteristic # 4**

### **Preaching the True Gospel**

The first 3 key characteristics have laid the groundwork for some of the additional identifying features of the one true Church. The 4<sup>th</sup> identifying feature of the one true Church is the true gospel. It should be no surprise that the one true Church of God would be found preaching the one true gospel.

The word gospel means "good news". Therefore the true gospel is the good news of the soon coming kingdom of God, Mark 1:15. Mr. Armstrong specifically emphasized that Jesus Christ is not a part of the gospel message and should not become a part of this message. He is the messenger who brought this message. The gospel booklet *What is the True Gospel* produced by the *Worldwide Church of God* can be used as a comparison to the gospel booklets that the various splinters have produced. This comparison will show that a different gospel has crept into the splinters. This is yet another characteristic, but not the only characteristic that can be found in the one true Church:

"This Work is the direct and one and only fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 for this very time: 'This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the END [of this world] come.' **The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the ONLY true Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, April 18, 1984

"When did our Western world get away from, totally lose sight of, the very gospel which God sent to this world by Jesus Christ? **Why haven't you heard the true original gospel of Christ before?** We've been supposing in our generation that a gospel of men, about Christ, was the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ is the gospel which he preached, not a message merely about his person. **Now Jesus gospel was the good news of the kingdom of God**"

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "What is The New Covenant", Herbert W Armstrong

"Now then they asked Him about the sign of His coming. And coming down to verse 14, He says, 'And this gospel of the kingdom' that's the gospel Jesus preached, the Kingdom of God 'shall be preached in all the world for a witness AND THEN shall the end come.' (Matthew 24:14)  
'I have shown time after time on this program how in 53 AD, the Church was started in 31 AD, and by 53 AD the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 1:6-7, the message to the Galatians that they already had turned to another gospel. And so the gospel of Jesus Christ was suppressed and people were not hearing it any longer.

“They've heard a gospel ABOUT CHRIST saying that Jesus is the Christ. Oh, that's been proclaimed all over the world. But they have denied the message He brought. **And His gospel is the message He brought, which is the Kingdom of God. You've been hearing the Kingdom of God on this program. That is the same gospel Jesus preached.**”

World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, “Easter is Pagan”, Herbert W Armstrong

**“The apostles later preached that same message of the coming world government of the Kingdom of God. This is the *only* gospel message acceptable to God.** ‘But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed’ (Gal. 1:8).

“Strong words those! But it does show just how important it is to God that His Church be preaching the right message. No other gospel will do! ...”

Booklet, *Where is God's Church Today?*, Page 34

### Characteristic # 5

#### The Apostles are Commission with Preaching the Gospel

The *Worldwide Church of God* began to grow in size at a phenomenal rate as the true gospel was being preached in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It grew at an average rate of 30% every year for the first 35 years. And the growth was a direct result of the preaching of the one true gospel which God was blessing.

In the 1950's, Mr. Armstrong learned and then he acknowledged, that he was fulfilling the role of an apostle. He understood that the conversions that were occurring in the Church, which were a direct result from preaching the true gospel, were the “seal” or the fruits of an apostle, I Corinthians 9:1-2.

And thus, a vital truth was restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong on how the gospel is to be taken to the world. The truth that was restored to the Church is that the commission of taking the gospel to the world was given to the apostles. Therefore, taking the gospel to the world eventually requires the presence of an apostle. Therefore, if the gospel is preached to the world, it must be led, it must be spearheaded by an apostle.

Any Church of God splinter that preaches the gospel without the eventual presence of an apostle has deviated from this restored truth. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> key truth and characteristic that is helpful in identifying where the one truth Church of God existed after the death of Mr. Armstrong:

“In I Corinthians, chapter 9, the apostle Paul shows the proof of his apostleship: ‘Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: **for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord**’ (I Cor. 9:1-2).



**“Just as proofs in the life of Paul set him forth as an apostle of Jesus Christ, in our time another has also been used by God in a powerful way. Through him, the Worldwide Church of God was established. Through him, the doctrines of God were restored to the Body of Christ. Through him, directly or indirectly, all of us in the Church have come to the knowledge of the truth, repentance and baptism. Through him, demons have been cast out and many have been healed - even of cancer. Isn't that the fruit, the seal of apostleship?”**

**“Directly, or indirectly, you are all MY children in the Lord.** This Church is GOD'S Church. Jesus Christ is its living HEAD. He chose and has used me as His Apostle — as His human servant and instrument through whom HE, not just I, raised up all this Church.

*The Worldwide News, “Satan Intensifies Persecution”, Herbert W Armstrong, June 16, 1980*

“And Peter then was led out of the prison because the brethren had prayed. You see, the lay members of the Church were given the part of backing the apostles who were to get the gospel out. **The word ‘apostle’ simply means ‘one sent forth’ with the gospel. And it was the apostles that were taking the gospel to the world,** not the lay members, but the lay members backed them with their prayers, with their tithes and in every way with their encouragement, every way that they could.”

Sermon, “Receivership and Prophecy”, Herbert W Armstrong, January 5, 1980

**“The word apostle means ‘one sent forth.’**

“The meaning here is unmistakable — as Peter was the chief apostle to Israel and Judah, so Paul was chief apostle to the gentiles.

“Nevertheless, when ALL of the scriptures on this subject are put together, it becomes certain that Peter, in fact, was the overall chief apostle...”

**“For remember an apostle is ‘ONE SENT FORTH WITH THE GOSPEL.’”**

*Good News Magazine, “How Christ Gives the Church Its Beliefs”, Herbert W Armstrong, November 20, 1978*

“Now then I'm trying to show you what the church did do, and what was the function of the church back in those days. You read right over this many times, but you never got the point, probably. Now then, if you did I'm glad. Lay members did not go forth with the gospel.

“It is the word apostle that means, ‘Go forth or one sent forth’. **And it is the apostles and later a few evangelists went out with the gospel,** but not the lay members. But the members backed up the apostles with their prayers, with their encouragement and with their tithes and offerings to support the work that it could go on.”

### **The Role Evangelists, Pastors and Ministers Play in the First Commission**

There are a number of offices that are given for various reasons in the Church of God. An example of one of those offices is the office of a deacon. This office is provided to assist brethren with the physical needs that a local congregation of the Church may have. A number of ministerial offices may be provided to fulfill the various spiritual and administrative needs of the Church.

Some of these ministerial offices, such as evangelists and pastor rank ministers, can be used to aid an apostle with the commission of preaching the gospel, but only in an abbreviated way. There are limitations in the scope of how they may assist an apostle with his mission:

"It's the same spirit working in each one of us. Now that is explained a little more explicitly in Ephesians 4 where it says in verse 11 that God gave some or Christ gave some 'apostles and some prophets', now then there are no prophets in the New Testament Church now. The prophets were, as I say, Old Testament prophets. 'and some evangelists and some pastors and some teachers'. **Now, the preaching of the gospel is primarily to apostles and evangelists. An apostle is one sent forth with the gospel, one sent forth. Well, an evangelist is one who also carries the gospel out.** And they're called evangelist in the New Testament who went out preaching the gospel to the world. But pastors are pastors over a local Church and preach to those who are already in the Church. **But a pastor even can carry the gospel into the world in his own community or neighboring communities.**"

World Tomorrow Broadcast, 'Gospel of Government', Herbert W Armstrong

**"This first and great commission was given to the apostles. To a lesser extent evangelists were used in carrying forth the message.** Other leaders—ordained ministers—were stationary, yet even the local pastor of a church may hold evangelistic services in his area—not the 'soul-saving crusade' type, but lectures ANNOUNCING and PROCLAIMING as a witness the coming KINGDOM OF GOD (the true Gospel)!

"This ENTIRE GREAT COMMISSION—proclaiming the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom, and 'feeding the sheep,' is a COMBINED administration and function of the Church.

"The individual lay member HAS HIS VITAL PART in proclaiming the GOOD NEWS (Gospel) to the world. How? **Not by going out and himself proclaiming Christ's message to the neighborhood or to the world. That is done primarily by the apostles, to some extent by evangelists, and to even a lesser extent in local areas by local pastors.** (The chief responsibility of local pastors is supervision of and preaching to the local church.)"

*Plain Truth Magazine, "A Voice Cries Out Amid Religious Confusion: Part 11", Herbert W Armstrong, March 1981*

## Supervision of Gospel

Just as it was mentioned, evangelists and lower ranking ministers may be used to assist an apostle in announcing the gospel of the kingdom of God, but only in a limited way. This is because the preaching of the gospel not only requires the presence of an apostle, it must be accomplished under the supervision of this office:

**“An apostle is ‘one sent forth’ with Christ's gospel message, including the supervision of proclaiming that message to the world by means and persons other than himself.** Also an apostle was given supervision over all the local congregations or churches (1 Cor. 16:1). The apostle Paul had oversight over the churches of the Gentile world (II Cor. 11:28)...

“Evangelists were leading ministers, proclaiming the gospel to the public, even raising up local churches and having supervision over some churches under the apostle. Therefore an evangelist may hold executive functions under the apostle in the Church headquarters or work today.”

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

“To administer these many operations, God — not a vote of the members — ‘hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.’ Or, as stated in more detail in Ephesians 4:11 (Revised Standard Version): ‘And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.’

**“An apostle is ‘one sent forth’ with Christ's Gospel message, including the supervision of proclaiming that message to the world by means and persons other than himself.** Also an apostle was given supervision over all the local congregations or churches (I Corinthians 16:1, II Corinthians 11:28).

“The prophets set in the foundation of the Church are those of the Old Testament, whose writings were used to form a considerable part of the New Testament and Gospel teaching and functioning. The word prophecy is often used in the sense of ‘to preach, or proclaim’. So some of the preachers might well be termed ‘prophets’ — but no prophets are mentioned as having either administrative, executive or preaching functions in the New Testament Church.”

Book, *A Voice Calls Out Amid Religious Confusion*, Herbert W Armstrong

### Characteristic # 6

#### The Members Role in Preaching the Gospel

If an apostle is the one who is commissioned to preach the gospel to the world, what is the role that the members have in this commission? What are they specifically suppose to do?

God's way of life is the way of give. And one of the most important ways that God's people can give is to give the gospel to the world, which is the wonderful news of a soon coming kingdom that will bring peace, happiness and everything good to this earth. By supporting the apostles with their tithes, offerings and

prayers, the members are able to live the way of give. Therefore, the member's role is to back up the apostle as he takes the gospel to the world. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> important characteristic of the one true Church:

**"And Peter then was led out of the prison because the brethren had prayed. You see, the lay members of the Church were given the part of backing the apostles who were to get the gospel out. The word 'apostle' simply means 'one sent forth' with the gospel. And it was the apostles that were taking the gospel to the world, not the lay members, but the lay members backed them with their prayers, with their tithes and in every way with their encouragement, every way that they could."**

Sermon, "Receivership and Prophecy", Herbert W Armstrong, January 5, 1980

**"Notice carefully. This GREAT COMMISSION to be SENT FORTH with Christ's Gospel message was given only to those who were apostles, and the word apostle means 'one sent forth' with the message ...**

**"And he said to them [the 11 apostles], Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."** That is, announce the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom of God. Continue, 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved...' But Jesus plainly said NO MAN could come to Christ — believe — except those specially called by the Father!

"Notice now the King James translation, 'Afterward he [Jesus] appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat... And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...' (Mark 16:14-16). Of course NONE could believe and be baptized EXCEPT those God the Father specially called. So there is NOWHERE ANY CONTRADICTION. **The GREAT COMMISSION was given to the APOSTLES — those 'sent forth' with the message — NOT the lay members of the Church.**

"What then? **Did not the lay members have any part in proclaiming the Gospel?** Definitely they did, as we have seen. **Their part was to back up the apostles — stand behind them with their prayers, encouragement, tithes and offerings.** They are PART OF A WELL-ORGANIZED TEAM, as we shall show in more detail."

Special Topics, "Where Is The True Church?", Herbert W Armstrong

**"Now came another example of how the Church stood back of the apostles. Remember, the word apostle means 'one sent forth.' Jesus had given the great commission to Peter and the apostles. The other members of the Church were not sent forth with the gospel.** They were called to support and encourage the apostles in getting out the gospel message, as GOD'S MEANS of developing in them God's holy, righteous CHARACTER, qualifying them for places as kings and priests in the KINGDOM!

"So here came another incident showing how the Church supported the apostles. Continue, verse 5 of Acts 12: '... but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him' — Peter. **The brethren stood loyally 100 percent back of God's apostles...**

**“Jesus gave His GREAT COMMISSION to the apostles—those sent forth with the message. The lay brethren were added to the Church to support the apostles.”**

*Plain Truth Magazine, “7 Proofs Of God’s True Church: Part 5”, Herbert W Armstrong, June-July 1979*

## **Characteristic # 7**

### **The Pattern**

When the Philadelphia era of the Church first started, Mr. Armstrong established a three point program to take the gospel to the world. He used a magazine, a radio broadcast which later became a video telecast, and personal visits with world leaders to accomplish the 1<sup>st</sup> commission. In addition, a host of literature was produced that explained the original truths that had been restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church.

Ambassador College was started to prepare and train ministers who could be sent to the field to care and nourish the sheep who were called by God and placed into the Church by Jesus Christ as a result of the 1<sup>st</sup> commission. This college also provided crucial training that members needed to serve in the administrative and supportive functions of the work of God.

A Headquarters campus was established to carry out and manage all that the work of God entails. It was a well organized entity that worked together efficiently to produced the various magazines, literature, as well as a number of World Tomorrow Broadcasts and Telecasts. But it was truly the spirit of God that made all of this possible, Zechariah 4:6.

Mr. Armstrong also began to have personal meetings, in the late 1960’s, with world leaders. This continued through the 1970’s and into the 1980’s. From this, he gained the title of an “unofficial ambassador for world peace”.

What you have just read is part of the pattern that was established in the *Worldwide Church of God* for the purpose of accomplishing and supporting the 1<sup>st</sup> commission. There is no doubt that God blessed this pattern because it yielded enormous fruit. And so, this is the 7<sup>th</sup> characteristic that will be found in the one true Church of God:

“I had planned a ‘**Three-Point Campaign**’ — spearheaded by the **radio broadcast**, followed by **The Plain Truth** and reinforced by **personal evangelism** holding six-nights-a-week meetings...

*Good News Magazine, “The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God – Chapter 5”, Herbert W Armstrong, September 1980*

“The radio broadcasts, started January, 1934, continued to bring an ever-increasing number of candidates for baptism and conversion. The end time had come. God was preparing a Church, well

organized on His own pattern, to be prepared as kings and priests to reign with Christ at His coming. **Beside the growth of the *Plain Truth* magazine, I was continuing to write many booklets on various important doctrines and truths.**

*The Worldwide News*, "Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God", Herbert W Armstrong, June 24, 1985

"With such vast mass communication facilities, one apostle could reach many times more people with the gospel message than the original twelve, plus the apostle Paul and others sent to Gentile nations. **I soon saw the need, as God's Word sets forth for the CHURCH, of evangelists, pastors, other elders and teachers—as well as people trained in ADMINISTRATIVE responsibilities.**

**"So God raised up Ambassador College to provide training for the supportive functions behind the apostle in the GREAT COMMISSION."**

*Plain Truth Magazine*, "7 Proofs of God's True Church: Part Six", Herbert W Armstrong, August 1979

### **Characteristic # 8 There is only One True Church**

At its peak, the *Worldwide Church of God* had an attendance of over 150,000. It was one united and joyful membership and the unity was the result of the doctrinal harmony that existed in Church, I Corinthians 1:10. "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" Psalm 133:1, was a true representation of the *Worldwide Church of God*. One of the foundational teachings that played a key role in establishing this marvelous unity was the doctrine of the one true Church.

Everyone understood that Christ only leads one Church and not two and that only one true Church can exist at any single point in time. Therefore, any Church of God group that formed or splintered before the death of Mr. Armstrong or that existed while Mr. Armstrong led the *Worldwide Church of God* cannot qualify as the one true Church.

An important point to remember is that out of the nearly 400 Churches of God groups that have formed since the death of Mr. Armstrong, only one can qualify as the one true Church. This is not to say that some of the members in the splinters are not God's people. They are God's people and God loves them very much. But they are outside the body of Christ.

And so, a key point that is extremely helpful in identifying the one true Church is that only one Church, the body of Christ, can exist at any single point in time. Mr. Armstrong was quite emphatic on this Biblical truth:

**"God has only ONE Church**, and that Church has a few hundred local congregations worldwide, all a PART — and an integral working part — of the **ONE spiritual organism**, the Worldwide Church of God, which is 'built upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom ALL THE BUILDING [with its many local congregations] FITLY FRAMED

TOGETHER groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' Its whole body (with its many local congregations worldwide) 'FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working [together]... of every part...' (Ephesians 2:20-21, 4:16). **Jesus Christ does not HEAD, guide, and work in any competing man or church. Christ is NOT DIVIDED!**"

*Good News Magazine*, "Christ is the Living Head of Only One Church – Not Two", Herbert W Armstrong, December 18, 1978

**"God has ONLY ONE CHURCH on earth**, which He directs in the doing of His Work — not TWO churches — not MANY denominations and sects, and 'groups.' **'But now are they many members, YET BUT ONE BODY'** (I Cor. 12:20 — see also v. 12, 13). **'For by one Spirit are we all (not part of us) baptized into ONE body.'**"

Brethren Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, May 2, 1974

**"... Jesus Christ does not work in two 'churches,' one competing against and trying to draw members from the other. Christ is NOT DIVIDED!**

**"God does not have two churches — only the ONE Church** that Jesus Christ founded in A.D. 31 and raised up to carry on in OUR time through His own chosen apostle."

*Good News Magazine*, "Christ is the Living Head of Only One Church – Not Two", Herbert W Armstrong, December 1978

### **Characteristic # 9**

#### **The Original Truth**

Mr. Armstrong began to understand some of the most amazing doctrinal truths as early as 1927. But it was a progressive restoration of truth that continued throughout his lifetime and it was not complete until the time of his death. And the remarkable fact is that the truths that were restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong were the same truths that Jesus Christ taught the apostles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century who in turn taught the Church. And it is these truths that defined the Philadelphia era of Church of God.

Therefore, the undiluted pure original truth that was restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church by Jesus Christ through Mr. Armstrong is a hallmark of the one true Church of God. This original truth is another key component that will be found in the one true Church. And the original truth must be intact and it must remain intact in order for the Church to continue to qualify as the body of Christ. Therefore, a key identifying characteristic of the one true Church is the original truth, which is synonymous with "the faith that was once delivered unto the saints", Jude 3:

**"Now the true Church of God, if you want to find what it is, it is made up, or composed of those individuals who have been begotten of God and who are now still led by the Holy Spirit of God** in the

way that the Holy Spirit would lead them. And they are filled with the Spirit of God — **those who believe the faith once delivered.**

“And by that I don't mean something that is now old-fashioned, but which was new-fangled a hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago. I don't mean the so-called old-fashioned gospel that was an absolutely new thing about two, or three, or four hundred years ago. **I mean the faith once delivered. I mean the faith that the early Church really had and held to. I mean the faith that was taught by the apostle Paul to the churches that were called,** supposed to be Gentile churches. Well they were not Gentile churches. But they were made up of those who had formerly been Gentiles and had been Gentile-born.”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “What is the True Church Like? Part 2”, Herbert W Armstrong

“One member wrote, stating clearly which is GOD'S Church. It is:

- 1) **Where God's TRUTH is.** Not with one disfellowshipped for trying to water down that TRUTH.
- 2) Where God's true Work is going out to the WHOLE WORLD.
- 3) Where Christ's chosen apostle is.

*Good News Magazine*, “Christ is the Living Head of Only One Church – Not Two” Herbert W Armstrong

**“Let's note carefully the meaningful words Jude used. 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 first-hand — 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).”

*Good News Magazine*, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974

**“I am going to call for GOD'S CHURCH TO GET BACK TO THE ORIGINAL CHANGELESS TRUTHS — for TRUTH is the SAME, yesterday, today and forever!**

*Good News Magazine*, “What You May Not Know!”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 28, 1978

**“Yet none is truly the Church OF GOD, unless it is GOD'S CHURCH, continuing in doctrine, practice, organization, in all ways on the original biblical pattern, headed by Jesus Christ, yet belonging to God the Father, empowered by the Holy Spirit, having GOD'S TRUTH,** fulfilling Christ's commission of proclaiming his GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD to the world as a whole.



**“And there is only ONE such Church! And it CANNOT BE DIVIDED. It remains ONE. In I Corinthians 1, the apostle Paul was inspired to command that all in the Church ‘SPEAK THE SAME THING.’ There must be no division in what is believed, taught or preached.”**

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

“First you have to look into the Bible to find out what the Church is. **Now, the true Church of God**, if you want to find out what it is, **it is made up or composed of those individuals who have been begotten of God and who are now still led by the holy spirit of God** in the way that the holy spirit would lead them, and they are filled with the spirit of God, **those that believe the faith once delivered.**”

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “The True Church Part 2”, Herbert W Armstrong

### **Characteristic # 10 The Messenger to Each Church Era**

Some of the most interesting prophecies that pertain to the Church can be found in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. These two chapters in Revelation contain special messages from Jesus Christ to His people in seven successive Church eras. Each of these messages is unique. They contain words of encouragement and of correction and they describe the dominant characteristic that would exist during each era.

But what is more fascinating is that Mr. Armstrong came to understand that each of the Church eras is assigned a human leader or messenger. He learned that these leaders or messengers are individuals that are selected and used by God to not only lead the Church during these eras but to pass on the important messages for each successive Church era.

Mr. Armstrong served as the leader and messenger that God raised up to lead and direct the Philadelphia era of the Church of God. This unique characteristic, the messenger to each Church era, can be used to identify the one true Church of God in the Laodicean era. The following is this incredible understanding that was revealed to Mr. Armstrong regarding this subject:

“The book of Revelation records seven messages to seven churches that existed in Asia Minor toward the end of the first century A.D.

“These churches-Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea-were located along one of the mail routes of the old Roman Empire.

“Riders would follow the route-carrying messages from town to town.

**“The messages to the seven churches have words of both encouragement and correction and they clearly show the dominant characteristics of each of the congregations at that time.**

**“But these messages were intended for a wider audience than the Christians in these small towns.**

**“They are a series of remarkable prophecies, by which the future of the true Church was foretold in outline form, from the day it began on Pentecost, 31, until the Second Coming of Christ. A.D.**

**“The history of the Church would fall into seven distinct eras—each with its own strengths and weaknesses and its own special trials and problems.**

**“Just as a message could pass along the mail route from Ephesus to Laodicea, so would the truth of God be passed from era to era.”**

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

“Of the Philadelphia era of God's true Church we read: ‘To the angel of the church....’ This word *angel* translated from the Greek *aggelos* means messenger or agent. **This is not necessarily always referring to a spirit angel but can refer as well to a human agent.** It is possible that God's principle of duality may apply here.

“It may apply to an actual spirit-composed angel that has been assigned as an overall agent or helper of this particular era of the Church. **Or it may also apply to the human messenger or agent God has raised up to lead this era of his Church.**

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

“Now let us turn to the book of Revelation.

“Chapter one gives the opening salutation and the introduction, giving the real SUBJECT of which the book is concerned. It is in verse 10: ‘I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.’

“In the opening salutation we find that it is NOT the revelation of John at all, but the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the Revelator—who does the REVEALING of what otherwise is non-understandable. The Apostle John was merely the WRITER, who recorded (1) the WORD OF GOD, (2) the testimony—direct words of—Jesus Christ, and (3) all the things that he SAW in VISION. In this vision, he was taken from the Isle of Patmos, where he actually was as he wrote, into THE DAY OF THE LORD—a special period of TIME here called the ‘LORD'S DAY.’

“The DAY OF THE LORD is the time when GOD supernaturally shall INTERVENE in this world's affairs, the beginning of His TAKING OVER all its governments, societies, production, commerce. We have had 6,000 years of the DAY OF MAN. Now we shall soon have 1,000 years of the DAY OF GOD.

**“Chapters 2 and 3 are messages direct from Jesus, in heaven, sent to the angels (which, some believe means to the chief human leaders of the SEVEN CHURCHES). Chapter 4 describes a vision of God's Throne in heaven...”**

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, November 19, 1976

“This twelfth chapter of Revelation carries a theme right through from then up to the coming of Christ and the world tomorrow ... And **sometimes the word angel means spirit angels composed wholly of spirit and sometimes the word angel**, I think in the Greek the word is angeles or angelas or angelos, anyways it **is used in some cases and translated in our Bibles in English to mean certain human leaders**. It is used interchangeably both ways. Anyway in this case it is referring to spirit composed angels ...

**“ ... But there is another Church that came a little later, and that begins in the 7<sup>th</sup> verse of Revelation 3 and the angel of the Church of Philadelphia. Now let me tell you, angel can have one of 2 meanings here. Either it can mean a spirit angel assigned to the Church or it can mean the human leader that God raises up for that Church. It can mean either one.”**

Sermon, “The Church in Prophecy”, Herbert W Armstrong, March 28, 1981

### **The Identity of One True Church in the Laodicean Era**

Out of the 400 splinters and slivers that have formed since the death of Mr. Armstrong, only one of these groups can qualify as the one true Church. So where is or where was, the one true Church in the Laodicean era? The only Church of God that had all of the key characteristics just listed was *The Restored Church of God*. The following is proof of the fact just mentioned:

There were many wonderful examples of spirit led Christians in RCG (Characteristic #1). RCG emphasized the importance of preaching the gospel and the membership responded with incredible generosity and with their whole heart because they understood how important this message is for mankind. Not only did the membership support the work with their tithes, offerings and prayers, many “sold all” and gave as much as they could give so that the 1<sup>st</sup> commission could be accomplished (Characteristic #3 and #6).

After the death of Mr. Armstrong, RCG continued to preach the wonderful news that mankind is in desperate need of, the good news of the kingdom of God (Characteristic #2). It did not mix Christ, who was the messenger, in the message (Characteristic #4). And gospel of the kingdom of God was taken to the world by an apostle (Characteristic #5), by one who is “sent forth” with this message. The leader of RCG served in this office.

The *Real Truth Magazine* was produced to spearhead the 1<sup>st</sup> commission. A video studio was constructed and numerous “The World To Come” programs that contained the original truth were recorded. And a vast amount of literature was rewritten to explain these wonderful truths (Characteristic #9). In addition, a college and a Headquarters campus was constructed so that the preaching of the gospel could be accomplished in the pattern that was established during the Philadelphia era of the Church (Characteristic #7).

The message that that is recorded in Revelation 3:14-21 was revealed through the leader of RCG in a number of books and it was made available to the Laodicean era of the Church. He is the only minister who has been able to thoroughly explain, in detail, the message to the 7<sup>th</sup> era, and in this way, has helped many brethren return to the original truth and the way of life that is revealed in the Bible.

The original *Splinter Explanation Packet* (SEP), including the sermons that came with this packet, were recorded to help the brethren who had a *Worldwide Church of God* background understand the falling away that had occurred in the *Worldwide Church of God* and how the splinters have altered, compromised, opposed and watered down the original truths that were restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through the end-time Elijah and apostle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mr. Armstrong.

The centerpiece book in this packet was titled *Anoint Your Eyes*. It was written to help God’s people who had a *Worldwide Church of God* background “anoint their eyes”, which is the process being able to see the condition the 7<sup>th</sup> era has drifted in which is a result of compromising and accepting watered down and erroneous doctrinal truths that still plague the splinters to this day.

This packet also contained a booklet titled *I Will Send You Elijah to Restore All Things*. This booklet offered proof of how Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah, a key teaching that all in the *Worldwide Church of God* once understood, a truth that the majority of the splinters now reject.

A book titled *The Work of God – Its Final Chapter*, explained the proper emphasis that each member and Church in general needs to place on the preaching of the gospel, an emphasis that exemplifies outgoing love and concern for mankind. It was written because there are some splinters who do not place the appropriate emphasis on this all important 1<sup>st</sup> commission.

And there were additional books, booklets and sermons that came with this packet. Through this material, the leader of RCG fulfilled the role of the messenger to the 7<sup>th</sup> era (Characteristic #10). And the SEP packet of material was perfectly in line with, was in complete harmony with, and completely supported the original truths restored to the Church in the Philadelphia era.

Since there is only one true Church, meaning, only one Church can exist at any single point in time, all other Church of God splinters that formed while the *Worldwide Church of God* was led by Mr. Armstrong cannot qualify as the one true Church (Characteristic # 8).

Brethren of the one true God, you were called by God and you were led by Jesus Christ into the *Restored Church of God* because this was the one true Church. Many heard the voice of truth in this organization when it was on track and many anointed their eyes. The original truth and the proper emphasis on the work of God was the reason that many attended services in this spiritual organism. It is the only Church of God that had all 10 of the key characteristics that were just listed.

### **The Falling Away of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

But it all changed in 2015, with the introduction of a 3 part sermon/bible study series that changed the identity of the man who fulfilled the end-time role of Elijah. The leader of RCG claimed this title with those sermons. A prophecy series soon followed titled “The Greatest Untold Story” (TGUS) and has continued into the year 2021 with over 270 sermons given.

This sermon series has introduced numerous teachings that oppose the original truths. TGUS has made over 100 changes to the original doctrines that RCG once adhere to, the precious truths that had been restored to the Church by Jesus Christ through His faithful apostle, Mr. Armstrong.

And so, after a significant amount of doctrinal error was introduced as a result of TGUS, RCG ceased from being the one true Church. It is important to note that when heresy takes root in the Church, Christ will remove Himself from it and He will cease to guide it. RCG now claims to have “moved on” meaning moved away from the truths that it once held fast to. In addition, this group has also stated that Mr. Armstrong had the wrong gospel.

It should be noted that the original Splinter Explanation Packet has been altered to reflect some of the new doctrines that are being taught in RCG. Therefore, this packet including the literature and the sermons should now be avoided.

And so, falling away is now well underway in RCG and the body of Christ is being forced to flee in order to survive. It should be noted that there are still a large number of brethren in RCG who know something is wrong, but they don’t know what to do:

**“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

**"God is very strict in demanding separation, between truth and error, between right and wrong, and God will not tolerate it. Now what is human nature? It's a mixture of good and evil, it's a mixture of right and wrong. It's a very bad mixture my friends and that's what you've got to get rid of...**

"Well Jesus said this is the condemnation that light is come into the world but men love darkness rather than the light and that darkness is a mixture of good and evil."

World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, "The Gospel Jesus Preached 2", Herbert W Armstrong

"My son Garner Ted had taken to himself authority never given to him. He took advantage of the fact I was in other parts of the world, carrying Christ's Gospel Message into other countries, to assume authority to CHANGE DOCTRINES, and to CHANGE POLICIES. I had denied him BOTH! Much of it was done SECRETLY! Top-ranking ministers were warned of being fired if they told me what was going on.

**"Many of the basic BIBLE TRUTHS God had revealed to me as the very FOUNDATIONAL BELIEF OF THIS CHURCH were BEING CHANGED! It was no longer GOD'S College or GOD'S Church! It was becoming precisely what my son is now trying to build—'GARNER TED ARMSTRONG'S CHURCH"! He was surrounded by a small group of secular self-professed "intellectuals.'"**

Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, July 24, 1979

So now, this leaves God's people with a dilemma. Where is the one true Church *NOW*? Where is the body of Christ to be found after the recent changes in doctrine that has happened in RCG? The next chapter in this document is tailored towards helping God's people find their way back home, back to the one true Church after the last and final falling away that will ever occur in the history of the Church of God.

# CHAPTER THREE

## WHERE IS THE ONE TRUE CHURCH NOW?

### God's Ministers Can Be Deceived

The following statement may surprise many, but God's true ministers can be deceived and even become confused. This is a sobering fact and one that has been well documented. It has happened in the history of God's Church and it can happen to any true minister if he is not careful. Mr. Armstrong emphatically warned the Church of this fact:

"ALL, except Jesus, since Adam, have been DECEIVED and led by Satan from earliest life. Satan began working on and deceiving human minds even during the first year of life — injecting his attitude of SELF-CENTEREDNESS, vanity, coveting, competition, resentment of authority. **But what about a top ranking minister?** He is one who, supposedly had previously become aware of that, had REPENTED of that self-centered way of sin, and turned to God's way.

"He, if deceived by Satan and used by him, is one who, like Lot's wife, began to 'look back' — even if just a little at first. **He may have been willing to compromise on a minor point. He became a little 'liberal' on some point. Or he let vanity, covetousness, desire for personal POWER, or self-righteousness, or disagreement on a doctrine, introduce a wrong ATTITUDE against the Church or God's WAY.** I have explained all this above. **One step in the wrong direction leads to another.** He becomes 'lost in the dark woods' so to speak. He is for the moment not being 'LED BY GOD'S SPIRIT.' **Soon he will be misled on another point, then another.** Or, he comes to a new 'truth' and allows it to ignite a wrong attitude. **He will go farther and farther away from God's REAL truth, and farther and farther into error.** But HE IS STILL IN HIS 'RIGHT,' BUT CARNAL MIND — not necessarily demon possessed."

*The Worldwide News*, "Satan Deceived And Use Me? - Never", Herbert W Armstrong, December 8, 1980

**"These ministers thought they had discovered a new truth, contrary to the teaching of God's Church.** They knew well they should have come with it first to headquarters or to me personally, to make it official doctrine. Thus it might — if true, — be shared with the whole Church worldwide. But they allowed a spirit of vanity, self-centeredness and competition to enter. They kept it from headquarters, but began teaching their 'new truth' to their own churches.

**"But their 'new truth' was gross and harmful error. They misled brethren — for the time being. They opened their minds for Satan to DECEIVE and to USE them!**

**“You take one such false step, accept one false ‘truth’ and refuse to REPENT of it at once, and turn from it, you will then go into more and more error.”**

*The Worldwide News*, “Satan Deceived And Use Me? - Never”, Herbert W Armstrong, December 8, 1980

**“In God's Church in our time I have seen how Satan cleverly and without their knowledge uses humans to destroy GOD'S TRUTH and inject false or counterfeit doctrines instead.”**

“The record, in our time, has been written. And the record has been written of how it was done in the first three centuries of the Church.

“The Church of God started out, A.D. 31, under the original apostles, taught personally by Jesus Christ, pure in doctrines.

**“Yet by about A.D. 58, the apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: ‘I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel...but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of [Jesus] Christ’ (Gal. 1:6-7).**

“To the church at Corinth the same thing was happening. To them Paul wrote, ‘But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted’ (II Cor. 11:3). **Today, if one should suggest that a brother or minister in the Church has unsuspectedly been led in any degree by Satan, he will rise up in furious indignation and angrily retort that Satan can't influence him!** That is to say, ‘I am stronger and more firm and righteous than Satan — Satan never could deceive me!’”

*Good News Magazine*, “How Satan Injects False Doctrines”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 1979

### **Why Would God Not Correct the Leader of the Church?**

Some who are able to recognize that false teachings are being introduced to the Church or that true doctrines are being watered down have asked the following question, “Why would God not correct the leader of the Church if he begins to mix error with truth or if he waters down doctrine?” This is a sincere and honest question and one that needs to be answered.

A falling away that some are familiar with is the apostasy that happened in the in the *Worldwide Church of God* soon after the death of Mr. Armstrong. It has been estimated that at its peak, the Church had a membership of over 150,000. It has also been estimated that only about 35,000 members survived this event.



But this defection from the truth also left the remaining brethren scattered, confused and in disarray. And it was this event that gave birth to the Laodicean era.

It is difficult for some to understand that ministers in the Church of God can leave the truth. It is even harder to conceive that even the leader of the one true Church can mix error with the truth. So why would God allow this to happen to a minister or the leader of the Church of God? Why would God not correct His ministers or the leader of the Church when this happens?

God loves and cares deeply for His people. It is stated in Hebrews 12:6 that He chastens those whom He loves. He chastens His people because wants to see them correct their ways and the errors that they have engaged in so that they can be a part of His family. This is His ultimate good with everyone.

And this includes every spirit begotten member, every minister and even the leader of the Church. Therefore, God will no doubt, out of love, chasten any individual and minister that deviates from the truth. But there is no guarantee that those whom God chastens will correct their ways. This is because God created every human being as a free moral agent, free to choose right from wrong, truth from error.

There are a few exceptions to this rule. The Bible specifically mentions a small number of men who were chosen by God because He knew they would remain faithful to the truth, to Him and to His way of life. But once again, these individuals are specifically mentioned in the word of God.

The falling away from the truth that happened in the *Worldwide Church of God* in the early 1990's can be considered one example where leaders introduced false doctrines, and thus caused a falling away, where a correction back to the truth was not made. It is presumed that God chastened the leaders of the *Worldwide Church of God* who were responsible for this, but since a correction was not made, it is assumed that the leadership did not heed the chastening:

**"Now God chastens and corrects every son whom He loves.** And if you are without correction you are not sons, God says, you are bastards! (Hebrews 12:6-8) And that's another ugly word. These ugly words — they're in the Bible. God speaks in plain language. He doesn't pull His punches, He speaks right out what He means. And listen, everyone who refuses correction and who is not corrected is not a son of God. They are not the children of God. They are not saints or converted Christians."

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "What is the True Church Like? – Part 2", Herbert W Armstrong

"Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. **God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God compels each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION,** and the true GOD will never force you to be converted."

*Good News Magazine*, "WHERE IS the original true Church that Jesus Christ founded?", Herbert W Armstrong, August 1983

**"The Creator also made man a FREE MORAL AGENT — and for a purpose! — FREE TO DECIDE WHICH WAY OF LIFE HE WOULD FOLLOW!"** Ever since Adam in the Garden of Eden, man, somehow, has believed that the law of God is wrong and that man is sufficient unto himself. Man has followed the ways of vanity and of GREED ever since."

*Plain Truth Magazine*, "Explaining What Love Means", Herbert W Armstrong, December 1964

"The devil cannot put his ideas into your mind, unless you are willing. The devil cannot exert any force or compulsion on you whatsoever. **You are a free moral agent.** But the devil does have a certain power of persuasion, of influence, of deception, because human beings have been willing to submit to it. And human beings have not been willing to submit to God and the rule of God. God's law has been here — God is the supreme ruler and being the supreme ruler, **God has decreed that the devil may tempt us up to a certain point, and that man is a free moral agent and to decide for himself which course he shall follow...**"

World Tomorrow Broadcast, "Repent – Surrender to God", Herbert W Armstrong

"And when we are made God then you find you will still grow. You know, I believe God is still growing Himself. **A couple of weeks ago God didn't know a lot of things that were going to happen on the earth that have happened since because humans still are free moral agents and they make up their own minds what they are going to do and God allows that.** Now God knows things now He didn't know two weeks ago."

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

### **Where is the One True Church NOW?**

So if RCG was at one point in time the one true Church, and since they have now "moved on" meaning move away from the original truth, and since this group is no longer the one true Church, the following question begs an answer, "Where is the one true Church NOW?"

Those in RCG once had their eyes anointed. They once understood that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the office of an apostle and that truth only enters through this office. The one understood the Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah who restored "all things" meaning the truth to the Church. They once held fast to the original truths that were restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church.

And since it is not a matter of whether or not the one true Church will exist at the end of the age, but where it will be found, this can only mean that it has to assemble itself somewhere else, once again. There are some

Biblical truths that need to be examined and some additional characteristics that the one true Church will have that will play a role in identifying the location of this Church in the wake of the latest apostasy.

### **The 7 Additional Characteristics of the One True Church**

We will begin by listing 7 additional characteristics and Biblical truths that will play a role in identifying the one true Church. A couple of these characteristics have already been mentioned, but they are of extremely pertinent that they are worth mentioning again.

After the list, we will hear Mr. Armstrong expound on each point on the list using the material that is still available from the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Mr. Armstrong. It is important to remember that these are not the only characteristics and Biblical truths that pertain to the one true Church, but they are enough for anyone who is sincerely looking for this Church, to be able to identify the location of where the body of Christ now exists:

- 1. A Falling Away Does Not Nullify the One True Church When it Was on Track** – When there is a falling away from the truth in the one true Church of God, it does not disqualify the Church, prior to the time that it defected from the truth, from being the one true Church of God.
- 2. Known for “Holding Fast” to the Truth** – The one true Church is known for “holding fast” to the truths that were restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church, Revelation 3:11. And it is known for “holding fast” to these same truths when a defection from the truth happens in the one true Church, II Thessalonians 2:1-7.
- 3. There is only One True Church** – This means that only one true Church can exist at any single point in time. Since it has been proven that RCG was the one true Church before it mixed a significant amount of error with the truth, any Church of God organization that was in existence between 1999 and 2015 cannot qualify as the one true Church because, only one true Church can exist at any single point in time.
- 4. There is Only *One* Biblical Reason to Leave the One True Church** – There is only one Biblical reason a minister or a member can leave the one true Church, and that is to “hold fast” to the truth. And when a minister or member leaves the Church in order to “hold fast” to the truth, they must leave during a time of apostasy.
- 5. How Ministers are Disqualified** – The following are some of the Biblical reasons that disqualify a minister; Seeking higher office, Watering down God’s truth or turning members of God Church towards watered down doctrine, Teaching doctrines that are contrary to the original truths, Teaching heresies, Teaching doctrines that oppose God’s truth, Twisting the scriptures to bring in some ‘new doctrine’, Trying to disprove true doctrines, and Trying to destroy God’s truth and inject or counterfeit doctrines. And finally, any minister who leaves the Church or is removed from the Church for any reason other than the truth, disqualifies himself from serving as a true shepherd.

6. **The One True Church Does *Not* Consist of Scattered Individuals** – When there is a falling away in the Church, if the individuals responsible for this cannot be put out of the Church, the brethren must leave in order to stay in the truth. Once a faithful minister or ministers stand up for the full truth or begin to restore the original truth, the holy spirit will lead members back to the body of Christ once it is established. This is because the one true Church does not consist of scattered individuals, which are individuals that are outside the body of Christ.
7. **The Apostles are Commissioned with Preaching the Gospel** – The “seal” or fruit of an apostle are the conversions that happen as a result of preaching the gospel. The apostles were the ones commissioned with taking the gospel to the world. The word apostle means one who is “sent forth” with the gospel. Any minister of Church of God group that engages in preaching the gospel to the world without the presence, or eventual presence of an apostle or ordained evangelist has deviated from restored truth.

#### **Additional Characteristic # 1**

##### **A Falling Away Does Not Nullify the One True Church When it Was on Track**

When there is a defection from the truth in the one true Church of God, it does not disqualify the Church, prior to the time that it defected from the truth, from being the one true Church of God. An example of this is the apostasy that happened in the *Worldwide Church of God* shortly after the death of Mr. Armstrong.

The *Worldwide Church of God* left the truth several years after Mr. Armstrong’s death. But this event did not disqualify the *Worldwide Church of God* from being the one true Church prior to the time when the defection from the truth occurred.

When the apostasy in the *Worldwide Church of God* gained speed, most of the brethren left the truth completely. Their faith was so shattered by the apostasy that many came to the conclusion that the *Worldwide Church of God* was never the one true Church. This is why, and it cannot be emphasized enough, that when an apostasy strikes the one true Church, it does not disqualify it from being the one true Church prior to the apostasy.

The New Testament has several warnings to God’s sheep about false doctrines and teachers that the apostles had to contend with. These erroneous doctrines were introduced from within the Church by some of its leaders and teachers, Acts 20:28-31, Galatians 1:8-10 and III John 9-10. And even though a false gospel and other false doctrines and even false teachers infiltrated the one true Church in the first century, no one would ever doubt that the New Testament Church that started on Pentecost of 31 AD was the one true Church of God. The following is just one account of the Church of God as it struggled to survive;

**“Following the martyrdom of many of their faithful leaders, many Christians fall victim to error. Confused and disheartened, they become easy prey for wolves. False teachers were nothing new to the Church.** The crisis had been a long time in the making.

**“As early as A.D. 50, Paul had declared to the Thessalonians that a conspiracy to supplant the truth was already under way.** ‘For the mystery of iniquity doth ALREADY work,’ he had written to them (II Thess. 2:7).

**“Paul also warned the Galatians that some were perverting the gospel of Christ, trying to stamp out the preaching of the true gospel of the kingdom of God** that Jesus preached (Gal. 1:6-7). **He told the Corinthians that some were beginning to preach ‘another Jesus’ and ‘another gospel’** (II Cor. 11:4). He **branded them ‘false apostles’ and ministers of Satan** (verses 13-15).”

*Plain Truth Magazine*, “The History of Europe & The Church - Part One: The Church Struggles for Survival”, June 1983

**Comment:** It is worth noting one more time, that even though the leadership of the *Worldwide Church of God* left the truth and started the falling away of the 1990’s, this falling away did not nullify the fact that it was the one true Church of God prior to the falling away. The same principle holds true for the *Restored Church of God* and the recent events there. The falling away from the truth that began in 2015 does not nullify the fact that it was once the one true Church when it was teaching the full truth.

## **Additional Characteristic # 2 Known for “Holding Fast” to the Truth**

There is a special message to the Philadelphia era of God’s Church that is found in Revelation 3:10-11. It is a message of hope and it is the instruction to “hold fast” to the original truths that were restored to the Church during the 6<sup>th</sup> era.

The instruction to “hold fast” is especially pertinent during a time when a falling away from the truth takes place in the Church of God. Many may not be aware that this instruction is also found in II Thessalonians 2:1-7. So where is the instruction to “hold fast” found in II Thessalonians 2:1-7? It is found in verse 6 and 7. Both of these verses contain the Greek word “katecho”, which means to “hold fast”. The word “katecho” in II Thessalonians is the same Greek word that was translated “hold fast” in Revelation 3:11 and in I Thessalonians 5:21.

It is interesting to note that the context of chapter 2 in II Thessalonians is found in verses 1 and 2, and the context is the end of the age, the time prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Verse 3 is also the verse where the Greek word “apostasia” is found, which means a falling away or a defection from the truth.

Therefore, Revelation 3:11 paired with II Thessalonians 2:1-7 contains the specific instruction that God’s people must follow when there is a falling away from the truth. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> key characteristic that will help

God's people find the one true Church after the final falling away that has now happened in RCG. The body of Christ will be found "holding fast" to the original truths:

"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

"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

"I want to get as CLOSE to GOD's true doctrines as possible, and as far away from Satan's ways as possible.

"If there is any reason why the living Christ chose me as His Apostle, it is that **I will not compromise a thousandth of an inch on God's true doctrines.**

**“Did you ever realize GOD won't compromise with them? No doubt God had the POWER to just forgive us our sins, without having to give His only begotten Son Jesus to pay our penalty— and Jesus had to give His LIFE to pay our penalty rather than compromise with His Law!”**

**“Brethren, LET US STAND FIRM in the truth of the Eternal GOD!** If ever I needed you to stand back of me as Christ's chosen Apostle, IT IS NOW!”

Co-worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, June 25, 1985

### **Additional Characteristic # 3 There is only One True Church**

This important doctrine has already been mentioned as Characteristic # 8 in the previous list of identifying characteristics. But it will take on new meaning in finding the one true Church after the recent falling away that has now happened in RCG.

RCG was the only Church of God that had all of the key characteristics of the one true Church when it was on track and thus qualified as the one true Church from its inception in 1999 until it mixed a significant amount of error with truth that it fell away, which was sometime after 2015.

Therefore, applying the Biblical principal that only one true Church can exist at any one single point in time, any Church of God splinter that existed between 1999 until 2015 cannot possibly qualify and thus be the one true Church.

This key truth will eliminate a vast number of Church of God groups and splinters from qualifying as the one true Church of God between the years 1999 and 2015. This is not to say that the brethren in the splinters are not God's people. They are God's people and God cares about them very much but they are scattered in numerous organizations and are thus outside the body of Christ. Remember, Mr. Armstrong taught the brethren that Jesus Christ is the living head of only one Church, and not two. And that the body of Christ is not a divided but that it speaks and believes the same doctrines:

**“Where is the original true Church today? Now Jesus Christ had said, when he was on earth ‘I will build my Church’. And he did build it, but he didn’t say Churches, he didn’t say many different denominations, everyone speaking something different. He said one Church and it is one body and the Bible says they are all speaking the same thing,** there is no division.”

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

### **Additional Characteristic # 4 There is Only *One* Biblical Reason to Leave the Church**

There is only one Biblical reason a minister or a member can leave or be removed from the one true Church of God, and that is, to “hold fast” to the truth during a time of apostasy. And, the only time when a minister or member can only leave is when the Church is in the process of falling away from the truth, and not prior to the time when a defection from occurs.

**“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!**”

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

**“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

**“By their false doctrine these false teachers were dividing the Church. And the true Christians were put out of the visible Church and the visible Church persecuted God's people.** Already in the days of the Apostle John, at the end of the first century, an apparent elder by the name of Diotrephes cast out of the Church any of his people who would have fellowship with the disciples of John (III John 9-10). This trend continued and eventually many were following the errorists (II Pet. 2:1-2).

*Good News Magazine*, “The Faith Once and for All Delivered”, August 1974

### **Additional Characteristic # 5 How Ministers are Disqualified**

Mr. Armstrong gave no other reason to leave the one true Church. Therefore, any minister who leaves or is removed from the one true Church for any other reason other than to “hold fast” to the truth, or who leaves or is removed from the Church prior to a time of apostasy, are like branches that have been separated from the vine and disqualify themselves as ministers. It should be noted that a minister who leaves or is removed from the Church is also not qualified to lead or serve God’s people:



**"The CHURCH is the BODY OF CHRIST.** And Jesus pictured Himself as THE VINE, and we of His Church are the BRANCHES on that vine. Notice it — study it — in John 15. Jesus is not SEVERAL SEPARATED VINES — He is one vine! **The members of the BODY OF CHRIST are the BRANCHES! — but not separated, isolated branches. ALL ARE JOINED TO THE ONE VINE — the BODY OF CHRIST.**

**"Separated 'Christians,' or 'groups' are branches broken off from the VINE — the BODY OF CHRIST!"**

*Good News Magazine*, "Is God's Church Composed of Many Separate 'Groups'?", Herbert W Armstrong, December 18, 1978

"Now, notice the next verse, '**For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ**, but their own belly; and **by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple**', and that is Romans 16:18. And **some of you brethren have wanted to hear those good words and those fair speeches** coming from persons of a personality of charisma even though you were disobeying God. 'Well, if I disobey God I still want to know what they say'. Is that the way you think of it? Is that what you are going to say to Christ in the judgment?

"Notice further the commands of Paul. God's message through Paul, I Thessalonians 3:6 '**Now we command you, brethren**' it's a command from God. '**in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly**'. I Thessalonians 3:14 'And **if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him**, that he may be ashamed'. **Do you do that?** Oh no, several of you members want to disobey that. How do you ever expect them to get into the kingdom of God?

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

All of God's people must be able to discern a true minister from one that has been disqualified. This is because some of them have started new groups and with so many Churches of God in existence in this final era, distinguishing a true shepherd from a false shepherd is imperative to God's people because these men and the groups they lead must be avoided.

Ministers who are removed or disfellowshipped from the Church or who leave the Church for the wrong reasons will rarely, if ever, admit that they were removed from the Church for just cause. But on the contrary, they will almost always provide a reason to justify their removal from the Church:

"The Church of God started out, A.D. 31, under the original apostles, taught personally by Jesus Christ, pure in doctrines.

"Yet by about A.D. 58, the apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel ... but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of [Jesus] Christ' (Gal. 1:6-7).

“To the church at Corinth the same thing was happening. To them Paul wrote, ‘But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted’ (II Cor. 11:3). **Today, if one should suggest that a brother or minister in the Church has unsuspectedly been led in any degree by Satan, he will rise up in furious indignation and angrily retort that Satan can't influence him! That is to say, ‘I am stronger and more firm and righteous than Satan — Satan never could deceive me!’”**

*Good News Magazine, “How Satan Injects False Doctrines”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 1979*

In these next few quotes, you will hear Mr. Armstrong talk about some of the additional Biblical reasons that disqualify a minister. It has already been mentioned that a minister who has disqualified himself as a shepherd is in no position to lead or shepherd the one true Church:

**“I was forced to disfellowship from the Church forthwith a number of those seeking HIGHER OFFICE FOR THEMSELVES. They were seeking personal POWER in a spiritual organism with an annual income of some \$70 to \$80 million, which they wanted to change into a worldly secular ORGANIZATION where they could wield the POWER!”**

*Brethren Co-Worker Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, September 15, 1980*

**“Some ministers, whom I have not taught directly — who have come along since I was able to continue personally teaching the Bible courses in college — have been tending to want to WATER DOWN God's precious TRUTH — to see how close to SATAN'S WAYS they can get and STILL make it into God's Kingdom.”**

**“Let me tell you with power — the POWER OF THE LIVING CHRIST — you CAN'T DO THAT: You'll make it into the LAKE OF FIRE INSTEAD!”**

*Good News Magazine, “What You May Not Know!”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 28, 1978*

“Let's UNDERSTAND this! What doctrine have you learned? Where did you learn the doctrine? Answer? In or through the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD! How did the Church receive its doctrine — its beliefs — its teachings — when the Church first started, A.D. 31? The Church from the start received its doctrine from the APOSTLES!

“Jesus is the personal Word of God. The Bible is the written word of God. Both are the same!

**“In our day, Jesus Christ taught His chosen apostle through the written Word of God. The Worldwide Church of God — the same Church as founded in A.D. 31 — received its DOCTRINE through God's chosen Apostles!”**

“Now back to Romans 16:17. **Why have some leaders had to be disfellowshipped — MARKED?**  
Because of **causing divisions and offenses CONTRARY to the doctrine which you have learned!**

“God's Church is UNITED. We are commanded (I Corinthians 1:10) that we must ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING! **Those put out were splitting the Church speaking DIFFERENT THINGS!**

“Now notice the next verse: ‘For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple’ (Romans 16:18).

“And some of YOU brethren have wanted to hear those good words and fair speeches coming from persons of charisma, even though YOU WERE DISOBEYING GOD!

“Notice FURTHER THE COMMANDS OF GOD!

**“God's message through Paul, ‘Now we COMMAND YOU, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly... And if by any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed’ (II Thessalonians 3:6,14).”**

*The Worldwide News*, “God Commands That WE Avoid Certain Ones!”, Herbert W Armstrong,

**“Perhaps these ministers now **opposing God's TRUTH** and HIS CHURCH are themselves now deceived. Perhaps they are sincere — BUT THEY ARE SINCERELY WRONG AND IN THE CLUTCH OF SATAN!**

“Well then, you may say, ‘Should we not show them KINDNESS and LOVE?’ Well, should Christ himself show kindness and love toward Satan?

**“These people, even if sincere and deceived, are in SATAN'S service doing what SATAN WANTS DONE — helping Satan try to DESTROY God's one and only TRUE CHURCH!**

“Let's not REASON our way to DISOBEY GOD! **God COMMANDS ‘AVOID THEM!’ ‘AVOID THEM!’** does not mean to go hear them out of curiosity! You who do that are DISOBEYING GOD. You are trying to be more righteous than GOD!”

*The Worldwide News*, “God Commands That We Avoid Certain Ones!”, Herbert W Armstrong,  
February 25, 1980

**“Besides false brethren, **false ministers and teachers have come among God's people on many occasions. Peter mentions that false prophets will try to set themselves up as teachers among God's****

**people today (II Peter 2:1). Such people secretly bring in heresies**, denying Jesus Christ by their works (Titus 1:16) as well as their tongues.

“These people with feigned words, smooth speech, false pretenses and hypocrisy, make themselves appear as if they are religious and holy. Some brethren look only on the outside, and are deceived!

“If a false brother came to you, apparently agreeing with what you say, apparently agreeing with God's ministers, **would you then be fooled if he gradually began to twist the Scriptures**, or to bring accusations against the brethren and ministers, **or to bring some ‘new doctrine’?**”

*The Worldwide News*, “Beware of False Brethren, Warns Evangelist”, August 27, 1984

**“Yes, Satan has tried to WATER DOWN true doctrine — to turn God's Church to false truths.**

Apparently it is unhappily true that some willingly fall by the wayside and shall not continue on to enter into the KINGDOM OF God! But I have not retired — I am still vigorously active. Jesus Christ is still on God's throne, as the dynamic living HEAD of God's Church!”

*Good News Magazine*, “How Satan Injects False Doctrines”, Herbert W Armstrong, August 1979

**Comment:** Because God is a loving and merciful God, any minister or for that matter, any member of the Church who has been disfellowshipped or who has left the Church, for any reason other than the truth, can be grafted back into the body of Christ. But before they are grafted back, these individuals must “bring forth fruits, meet for repentance”, Matthew 3:8:

“But sadly we remember that part of the responsibility is ours in not strictly heeding the admonition in Romans 16:17 to note those that cause division and avoid them. We love them all and pray for them. Some of them who have gone out from us were parents, children, brothers, sisters or close relatives to those who remain steadfast.

**“Meanwhile, we pray also that God will keep those of us who remain loyal, constantly steadfast, growing in grace and spiritual character and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,** overcoming self, the world and Satan and enduring to the end. Pray that you, the loyal members of God's Church, remain dedicated to the Kingdom of God — which is the government of God.

“Now one final reminder to the Church and all loyal ministers. **If any who have gone out from this wonderful fellowship that we have in God's one and only true Church, profess repentance and wish to come back, they must now, as John the Baptist said, ‘Bring forth fruits meet for repentance’** or prove their repentance by performance over an adequate period of time. I personally do, and hope all of our loyal members will, pray for their repentance and ultimate return.

### **What is a New Church of God Group or Splinter?**

A vital understanding that all of God's people need to have is what entails or what exactly is a new Church of God group, which are commonly referred to as splinters.

No minister, regardless of their rank, has the authority to alter, water down, or introduce erroneous teachings that oppose the original truths. There are many nuances in the truth, changes in doctrine, and watering down of the original true, that has occurred and is still occurring in the splinters today.

Therefore, any group that changes, waters down, introduces heresies, or introduces doctrines that oppose any of the original truths has in essence created a new Church of God group which is often referred to by God's people as a splinter.

This also includes groups who are led by ministers that left the Church or were removed from the Church for reasons other than the truth. All such groups should be considered new organizations or splinters that cannot possibly qualify as the one true Church and should be avoided:

"Judaism was divided into many sects in Jesus' day. Each had its peculiar beliefs...

"Judaism was not one unified organization. Actually, there were many religious sects comprising it. And, even within some of these major sects there were many **'splinter' groups which had their own ideas and beliefs.**"

*Good News Magazine*, "Is Judaism the Religion of Moses? – Part 1", December 1960

"'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

" ... Three to 3 1/2 years after the church began, Paul alludes to the difficulties there.

**“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing,** and that there be no divisions among you... For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

“Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (I Cor. 1:10-13).

**“Paul's point was that the Church as one body cannot be splintered into various factions, divisions or sects.”**

*Good News Magazine, “The Sad Story of the Church at Corinth”, August 1979*

#### **Additional Characteristic # 6**

#### **The One True Church Does *Not* Consist of Scattered Individuals or Groups**

There have been times in the history of the Church when the spirit begotten members have had to leave the Church due to a defection from the truth that started from inside the Church. They have had to do this in order to remain in the truth and in God’s way of life. In this way, the Church members have a history of becoming scattered.

Although there have been times in the history of the Church when it has had to flee because of the infiltration of false teachings, remaining scattered is not what Jesus Christ intended for the one true Church that started in 31 AD. On the contrary, the intention is that Church of God, the spirit begotten members stay united in as one group in the truth:

**“In His final prayer for His ONE Church,** not for the many sects or denominations masquerading as the true parent Church, **Jesus prayed: ‘I pray for them: I pray not for the world... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are.** I have given them thy word, and the world hateth them, because they are not OF the world, even as I am not OF the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not OF the world, even as I am not OF the world’ (John 17:9-16)...

**“The true Church — the ‘Church of God’ (I Cor. 1:2) — is not many divided quarreling denominations, but ONE Church, composed of many scattered members, ONE Church united in Spirit, mind, attitude and heart** because its members have totally surrendered their wills to God and have yielded to correction and reproof from the Word of God — the Bible...

*World Tomorrow Broadcast, “Where is the True Church Today?”, Herbert W Armstrong*

And because Christ is a gatherer and not a scatterer, when the Church becomes scattered because of an apostasy, he will gather those who want to return, back together into the body of Christ. God’s sheep hear the voice of Christ (John 12:49) which is the word of truth (John 17:17) as he calls them by name (John 10:1-5):

*The Worldwide Church of God*, when it was led by Mr. Armstrong, was united together in truth as the body of Christ. The history of this era was written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it did not consist of scattered individuals or a large number of splinters who are unable to agree on doctrine. It was one united organization that was in doctrinal harmony, I Corinthians 1:10.

And it will be in united and in the original truth (Revelation 3:10-11) at the end of the age because this has been the pattern of the one true Church of God. You have already read the first quote by Mr. Armstrong on this topic but it is reading it again:

**“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.”**

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

**“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 Moffatt 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

“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

“Notice what Daniel says about the Church: ‘And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end’ (Dan. 11:33-35).

“The prophet Ezekiel foretold this scattering — chapter 34. **Daniel again foretold it: ‘When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people (Church), all these things shall be finished.’ That is, the end of the age! (Dan. 12:7).**

“Nowhere is there any prophecy that the one true Church should become great and powerful, exerting influence in this world. Rather, Jesus called it the ‘Little Flock,’ despised, persecuted, scattered BY the world — separate FROM the world! **Scattered, but NEVER DIVIDED! Always ONE Church, speaking the SAME thing — never many differing sects!**”

Special Topics, “Where Is the TRUE Church Today?”, 1958

### **Additional Characteristic # 7**

#### **The Apostles are Commission with Preaching the Gospel**

We have already seen that the commission of preaching the gospel was given to the apostles as Characteristic # 5 in the previous 10 characteristics. But this truth will become more relevant in a way that may not be so obvious.

Remember, the “seal” or fruit of an apostle are the conversions that are a result of the preaching of the gospel. In addition, it was the apostles who were “sent forth” to spearhead the 1<sup>st</sup> commission.

Therefore, the presence or the eventual presence of an apostle is necessary if the gospel is to be proclaimed to the world. In addition, this office that is responsible for the supervision of the preaching of the gospel. Any Church of God group that deviates from this truth has deviated from restored knowledge and has engaged in a commission they are not qualified to conduct.



And since no Church of God group has the authority to preach the gospel without the presence or the eventual presence of an apostle, any Church of God group that engages in preaching the gospel has in essence formed a new Church of God group or splinter.

### **The Identity of the One True Church after the Final Falling Away**

These are the additional 7 characteristics that will be helpful in identifying the one true Church after the most recent falling away. Of course, a couple of these characteristics were part of the first list but they were mentioned again because of their importance.

Christ made promised in Revelation 3:10-11. He stated that there will be a group that will “hold fast” to the original truths that were restored to the Philadelphia era of the Church and that this group will be physically alive at the return of Christ (Revelation 12:14 and I Thessalonians 4:15-17). The word of God also reveals that this same group will be the one true Church of God, the united body of Christ (John 17:11 and I Corinthians 1:10 and I Corinthians 12:12).

Since the word of God cannot be broken, the only question that remains is not whether the unified body of Christ will exist at the end of the age, but where is will be found. A loving and merciful God would not make it impossible, for those who are sincerely searching for the one true Church, to be able to find it. The final chapter is devoted to explaining who and what we are.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## “HOLDING FAST” TO THE ORIGINAL TRUTHS

### “Holding Fast” to the Original Truths

My family and I left RCG in the spring of 2019. We could no longer stay in an organization that was compromised with erroneous doctrinal teachings. And so, it was with great sadness that I sent the following letter to RCG:

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

It is with sadness that I write this email to you to inform you that I can no longer walk in agreement with the *Restored Church of God*. I have been having a difficult time accepting all of the new teachings. I cannot prove them from the Bible and they have been difficult to understand.

I will be going back to the old beliefs, the truths that we once understood while I was in the *Worldwide Church of God*, the truths that were revealed to and restored to the Church by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

Therefore, please accept my resignation and the resignation of my family from membership with the *Restored Church of God*.

I will miss the brethren dearly, which is one of the reasons I continued this long.

I wish you well and I thank you for all of your assistance throughout the years.

Sincerely,  
Luis Garcia

I search the Churches of God for the Church that was adhering to the original truths but I could not find a viable group. Some of these groups have altered, discarded or watered down many of these truths. Other groups have been formed by ministers who were removed, disfellowshipped or left the Church for reasons other than the truth and thus, are in no position to lead God’s people. And then there are a few groups that never placed the proper emphasis on the preaching of the gospel.

I had hoped that an evangelist, either from the *Worldwide Church of God* or from the *Restored Church of God*, would rise to the occasion and restore the original truth again. I had hoped that a “knight in shining armor” would have shown up and helped us and led us in truth.

A higher ranking minister should have been the one to have taken a stand for the truth. A higher ranking minister should have been the one to take the lead in helping God's people. But no one has risen to the occasion.

While no minister has the authority to start a new group, all true shepherds are obligated to "hold fast" to the original truth as he has been taught and to help others do the same. This is a responsibility that is stated in Titus 1:9 and Revelation 3:11. And as an ordained local elder, I have to take this responsibility to heart.

*The Remnant of The Worldwide Church of God* is not a new group. We are brethren who were once in *The Restored Church of God* or who have a *Worldwide Church of God* background and who are "holding fast" to the original truths. We were members of RCG who gave as much as we could give so that the true gospel could be preached to the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And in this way, we are the continuation of the one true Church.

The only way it is now possible to "hold fast", is by using the material that was produce by *The Worldwide Church of God* prior to 1986. This includes sermons, World Tomorrow Telecasts and Broadcasts, the *Good News Magazine*, the *Plain Truth Magazine* and more. This was the material that was once used to feed the sheep when the Church was led by a faithful apostle. And because truth is timeless, it will be used by once again to feed God's people now:

"Converted members of the true Church can fall into the same trap. Paul wrote Timothy: 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (II Tim. 4:2-4).

**"Not all false prophets come from outside the Church. Some were formerly faithful servants of God, but swerved from the 'straight and narrow' path.**

"The apostle Paul called the ministers of Ephesus together during his last visit to that ancient city. He knew that false prophets would soon descend upon the flock of God. So he alerted the leaders to the dangers that both pastors and flock would face.

"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you [overseers], to care for [feed] the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.' These wolves would mostly come from outside the Church.

**“But worse, ‘and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things [distorted doctrine] to draw away the disciples after them’ (Acts 20:28-30, RSV).**

**“Faithful pastors protect the flock from those who would spoil them.”**

*Good News Magazine, “Beware of False Prophets”, May 1979*

**“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*

### **Copyright Law**

Some may ask, “Is it violating copyright law to use the material from *The Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by Mr. Armstrong?” The use of such material is allowed under U.S.C. § 107 - U.S. Code Title 17 US Copyright Law. The following is a copy of this law:

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 106 and 106A, the fair use of copyrighted work, including such use by reproduction in copies or phonorecords or by any other means specified by that section, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include –

- (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- (2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
- (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

The fact that a work is unpublished shall not itself bar a finding of fair use if such finding is made upon consideration of all the above factors.

### **Should the Gospel be Preached After the Short Work?**

Most who were in the *Restored Church of God* will remember the immense focus that was place on the preaching of the gospel in a world that is in need of this good news. Many who were in RCG gave as much as they could to accomplish this wonderful goal.

Some sold properties and others took out equity loans on their homes. Others donated their savings account, and some even gave what they had saved in their retirement accounts so that the great commission could be accomplished by a spiritual organism that had their heart in the work of God. I am not aware of any splinter that has placed an emphasis like this on the 1<sup>st</sup> commission.

We no longer have the financial power to accomplish this goal in the pattern that was established in the *Worldwide Church of God*. We have very little else left to give. This is one reason we are not engaging in the 1<sup>st</sup> commission.

Another constraint is that the preaching of the gospel requires the presence or eventual presence of an apostle. There is not enough time left in this age to undertake an endeavor such as this that will produce the fruit which is the “seal” of an apostle. To preach the gospel without the presence, or eventual presence of an apostle is a deviation from restored truth.

A third reason is that we do not have and cannot afford a Headquarters campus and the talented people who can support the great commission. There is not much time left to organize this kind of talent in the pattern was established in *Worldwide Church of God* when it was on track.

And the fourth and final reason is that there is no other work that is prophesied to follow the “short work” that is “cut short” as mentioned in Romans 9:27-29. This correlates well with the work that RCG accomplished in the Laodicean age when it was preaching the true gospel. Obviously, the true gospel is no longer being preached by RCG and thus the work has been cut short.

The great worldwide work described in Matthew 24:14 correlates well with the preaching of the gospel by the *Worldwide Church of God* during the Philadelphia era of the Church, an era that also had the open door to do this, Revelation 3:8. The following are Mr. Armstrong words on the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14:

“The Worldwide Church of God is DOING THE WORK that Christ commissioned. It started out doing that Work. **That is THE PURPOSE for which God caused the membership, for the first time in generations — or since the first century — to MULTIPLY in numbers, so that there could be enough to grow into a WORLDWIDE Work. The Commission is: "Go ye INTO ALL THE WORLD" — "Go ye, and teach ALL NATIONS;" — "for a witness unto ALL NATIONS."** No other body, church, or group is doing that!

Brethren Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, May 2, 1974

**“The disciples asked Jesus Christ for a sign of his second coming and the end of the world, and he replied as you find in Matthew 24:14, and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come. Believe it or not, he was speaking of this very program of which you are listening this moment.”**

World Tomorrow Broadcast, “The Gospel Restored”, Herbert W Armstrong

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

The main focus of *The Remnant of The Worldwide Church of God* is help God’s people “hold fast” to the truth. We are dedicated to helping the brethren recover from the false teachings that many have absorbed and to provide a place where God’s sheep can gather. We are committed to ensuring that the flock is fed and that all members are spiritually healthy. To this end, we are not a new group but the remnant of the one true Church that is “holding fast” to the original truth, II Thessalonians 2:1-7 and Revelation 3:11:

“Who will be taken? **‘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.

“This trial takes place for an ‘hour.’ Is this an indefinite time, or does it refer to the same ‘hour’ the 10 kings receive power with the beast (Rev. 17:12)? (Compare Revelation 13:5.) Such a time of trouble can only refer to the Great Tribulation.”

*Good News Magazine*, “Is There a Place of Safety?”, May 1982, Page 21

**“Two can't walk together except they be AGREED! I now AGREED with Christ.** I have NEVER DISAGREED. You yourself—every begotten child of God—does, through human weakness, commit sin even after the most deep conversion. None has lived perfectly but JESUS. But when I stumbled through human weakness, Jesus picked me back up on confessing to Him and repenting, and asking help never to repeat the sin. **At no point did I DISAGREE nor water down HIS TRUTH.** He used me in building the Philadelphia era of HIS CHURCH—and in proclaiming His Gospel IN ALL THE WORLD!”

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

“Now then, next, let us come to John 21 and verse 15 ‘So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?’ Now he spoke to Peter, and about Peter, more than any of the others. Peter was unquestionably the leader of the apostles. ‘So Peter saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee’. **And Jesus said to him then, feed my lambs.** Then again he saith to him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Why yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. **And he said unto him, feed my sheep.** **Now that, feeding his sheep, was given to Peter, to be the head over the feeding of the flock,** and not to the twelve actually. Of course, I presume that to some extent it meant the twelve too. But this literally is speaking of Peter, and not the others. It's putting Peter first.”

World Tomorrow Telecast, “How Truth is Revealed”, Herbert W Armstrong

### **Christ Is Coming To the One True Church**

Mr. Armstrong understood the Biblical truth that Jesus Christ is coming to only one organization. He is coming back to the spiritual organism that has the full truth restored to it and that has all of the characteristics that have been described in this document. He is coming back to a Church that had their heart in the work of God.

Jesus Christ will be returning to the one true Church that is “holding fast” to the original truth. He will be returning to a Church that was tested and tried and that survived a final falling away just before the end of the age. It is this unified body of Christ that is perfectly jointed together in the same mind and in the same judgment that will be alive and will meet Christ in the air when he returns:

**“But Christ the second time is coming to a temple of will. Now what temple is He coming to? He’s coming to the Church.** And when He comes, the dead in Christ that have died in the Church will rise first, in a resurrection. **And we which are alive and remain at that time will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye,** this mortal shall put on immortality, and we will become God beings, no longer physical beings. Our faces will shine like the very sun. That is the glorious temple to which Christ is coming. We’re to rise and meet him in the air as He’s coming. And His people stand on that same day on the Mount of Olives. **It’s talking about this Church.**

**“Now Zerubabel built the temple to which Christ came the first time. He was a type, a forerunner of someone to build the spiritual temple, the Church to which Christ is coming the second time.**

**Brethren, you are that temple!** That ought to thrill you from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. You are that temple to whom He is coming.”

Sermon, “The Church in Prophecy, Herbert W Armstrong, March 28, 1981

“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.”**

Brethren Letter, Herbert W Armstrong, May 2, 1974

“Daniel prophesied of our time: **‘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 12:10). Truly this has been a time of trying and testing. **We are the firstfruits called to be students that we may become kings and priests and rule with Christ** (Revelation 5:10). **We in the Church are students, and we are in the time of final exams.**”

*The Worldwide News*, “Recent History of the Worldwide Church of God”, Herbert W Armstrong, 1985

## Conclusion

Brethren of the one true God, it was only by the grace of the living God that we were called and placed in RCG. This organization once had all of the key characteristics of the one true Church, just like the *Worldwide Church of God* once did. RCG was the one true Church until it “moved away” from the truth in 2015. This was an unexpected event which posed a dilemma. And this dilemma can be summarized in the following question “Where is the one true Church of God *NOW*?”

We had no choice but to leave RCG. We had to leave in order to stay in the truth. All that I know how to do is to “hold fast” to the truth, which are the original truths that were restored to the *Worldwide Church of God* when it was led by a faithful apostle, Mr. Armstrong who also fulfilled the role of the end-time Elijah. No splinter has, or has ever had, all of the key characteristics of the one true Church.

And so, the body of Christ is once again one spiritual organism that is united in truth. It is the original truths that were the bonding agent for God’s people in the past. And it is these truths that will bind God’s people together again at the end of the age. This final quote by Mr. Armstrong sums up the final years in the history of the one true Church of God. May God help everyone understand what you have just read!

**“But my friends, if I love the people and if I want to give you the truth of God, I have to tell you what I see God says. This is the Word of God. Adam and Eve didn't believe what God said in person to them. Jesus spoke to many thousands of people and only 120 believed what He said.**



“He talked to people who believed on Him. And, oh yes, they believed on Him. But He said, ‘You who believe on me. You seek to kill me because you don't believe My word.’ (John 8:37 paraphrased) ‘You don't believe what I say.’ **It seems like it's the rarest thing in the world to believe what God says.**”

World Tomorrow Radio Broadcast, “Easter Is Pagan”, Herbert W Armstrong

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

*Luis A Garcia*

Luis A Garcia  
(915) 590-2947  
[lgarciatexas@gmail.com](mailto:lgarciatexas@gmail.com)  
[www.TheRWCG.org](http://www.TheRWCG.org)

4/29/2021  
11/28/2021