

SHOULD  
**ACCUSERS**  
BE ANSWERED?

*by* David C. Pack

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Christ described our time as the age of hatred, betrayal, offense and lawlessness (Matt. 24:10-12). Many today use and promote innuendo, rumors, outright lies and other forms of deception to confuse and divide God's people, and defeat their confidence in Christ's ability to govern His Church. When presented with such information, what do—what will—you do?

Christ said, "If they have persecuted ME, they *will* persecute YOU!" This means attacks, sometimes vicious, are a fact of life for God's people. The true Church and especially its leaders stand squarely in Satan's crosshairs. It will receive the brunt of persecution *prior* to the Tribulation, when Satan will turn on the "remnant" of Laodicea (Rev. 12:17).

Certain questions arise: Should accusers be answered? What spirit motivates them? Did Jesus answer His accusers? Mr. Armstrong was attacked throughout his ministry. Did he answer accusers? Should I? What did Mr. Armstrong teach about this? What does God's Word say?

This book reveals the answers—and is the policy statement of The Restored Church of God about persecution and accusation, and our response to them.

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# INTRODUCTION

This book is an important, in fact *vital*, part of our *Splinter Explanation Packet*. At first glance, its subject might seem a curious one to address and include. Some explanation is necessary, and sets the stage for why this topic is so important.

In February 2000, as a result of a wave of particularly vicious attacks that had just occurred against me personally, and only a few months after The Restored Church of God began, I was faced with whether or not to answer my accusers. I was being confronted with outrageously false accusations from people purporting to bring the “facts” about my conduct. Over a period of about three months, these accusations had spread widely, and had been coupled with additional false charges, which had been made against me many years before.

Here was my dilemma regarding a response: There was no blueprint from the past in the Church for me to examine, explaining what should and should not be done. No one, including Mr. Armstrong, had ever addressed this subject in a full booklet, or even an article, let alone a book.

It was apparent I was facing an important choice that could not wait: Should I, or should I not, answer the charges against me. It was obvious to those who knew any facts at all that the accusations put forth were false—and to the point of utterly ridiculous—but I wanted to be sure that I handled this matter God’s way, and that what I said reflected sound biblical understanding. I wanted to be certain that I had fulfilled in the correct manner any obligation that I had to God’s people.

### Section I

I came to be very thankful for these early accusers because they forced me to squarely face and address my responsibility as a true minister of God under such trying circumstances. As a result, I set out to find out exactly what Mr. Armstrong had either said or taught about this subject—and what had been his personal policy when facing outrageously false accusations. I knew that he had been fiercely attacked throughout his ministry, so I knew that he had to have said something—and I had a pretty good idea what it was. I decided to also very thoroughly research God’s Word for the answers to the questions described on the back cover and the promo of this book. This led me, one month later, in March 2000, to write an extensive booklet titled, *Should Accusers Be Answered?*

Over the next four and a half years, the original booklet was variously expanded, strengthened, and periodically edited to improve overall clarity. Its final edition is the longer Section I of this book, and it now carries eleven chapters.

### Section II

In 2007, there was added another extensive article—“Beware of Grievous Wolves.” The Church of God has always been under attack from those the Bible calls “wolves,” and there came a need to address them in plain language. At my request, a team of men wrote this article from material given them at a time when we had just been attacked from within. This is the reason it references my name and is not written as though it came from me. This article appears as Section II.

### Section III

Six months after the original booklet appeared, it became necessary to write a specific follow-up article about “Why Attacks on The Restored Church of God Must Increase *and* Intensify!” Over the years, this original article was also expanded, strengthened and periodically edited to improve overall clarity. It now stands as the concluding Section III of the book.

Over time, it became clear that all three articles belonged under one cover in a single book. It became apparent that the sections of this book only form a complete picture when they are read—and studied—



together! Note additionally that the extensive chapter in *THE WORK OF GOD* volume titled “Time Is Running Out!” adds a great deal to all the instruction and understanding contained in this book, and could have easily been its own section here. It would be helpful to the reader to at least *review* that chapter (assuming you have read it) after reading this book.

*Should Accusers Be Answered?* covers scriptures that most rarely study and principles that you have probably never considered before. It is a practical guide that offers real help and instruction to those who study it carefully, and it presents a blueprint for the future! Note that, because the three sections were written at different times, and initially appeared as independent “stand-alone” articles in other publications, the book has a few necessary, but in each case helpful, repeating or overlapping principles and scriptures that are presented more than once in different contexts.



# SECTION I

# SHOULD ACCUSERS BE ANSWERED?

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Jesus said, “If they have persecuted ME, they *will* persecute YOU!” Should accusers be answered? What spirit motivates this attitude? Who is the “accuser of the brethren”?

Did Christ answer His accusers? Mr. Armstrong was attacked throughout his ministry. Did he answer accusers? Should I? What did Mr. Armstrong teach about this? What does God say?

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## THE DIE IS CAST

**I** hold no illusion: This book will be fiercely attacked by some. And it will step on a lot of toes because bluntness must be brought from God's Word to this subject, so central to the life of every true Christian at the end of the age.

Over 50 years ago, when Harry Truman fired the popular General Douglas MacArthur, he was attacked unmercifully for over one solid year by the press. While Truman suffered miserably in the polls, his response was to say that neither Moses nor Christ ever took polls to mean anything. Otherwise, he continued, Moses would never have led Israel from Egypt and Christ would never have died on the stake. He knew that courageous leaders do not do what is *popular*. They do what is *right*!

Though I wrote this book, I periodically reread it myself. This is because it is encouraging—even to its author. It explains what people in other groups, and those who reject what we are, or those who leave us, can be expected to do. You will be taught what God expects you to do when this occurs.

Understand that the die is now cast. Severe attacks will continue against God's true people for the rest of the age—probably growing greater each time they occur. Attackers know that the leaders of The Restored Church of God will not answer them. Therefore, we must try to prepare brethren, when possible, against new attacks that will surely come. What is presented here is intended to be a kind of “scrip-

tural inoculation.” I urge you to read it slowly and carefully, and to perhaps periodically *reread* it.

No man or organization can insulate those with God’s Spirit from a process planned thousands of years ago by God for His end-time Church (Dan. 11:33-12:13). Leaders can warn, but *you* must survive the coming tests that will be either *allowed by* God or directly *sent from* Him. Only *you* govern the outcome of these tests.

This material will teach you the truth about slander, attack, persecution and false accusation straight from the Bible. It explains what you *need* to hear—but it may not be what you *want* to hear. Of course, you may reject its contents. But consider that if you are taking the time and effort to read it, should you not at least approach it with an open mind? If so, *you* are the one who will benefit. If not, then only *you* stand to lose!

### An Extraordinary Contrast

Pause and consider the following reality. A remarkable phenomenon has been occurring in the “splinters.”

Have you ever asked *why* Jesus foretold widespread “offense, betrayal, hatred” and “iniquity [lawlessness]” among His people at the end? Do you see this attitude occurring in the world’s churches in any major way, including the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) remnant? Generally only a fraction of this attitude is found in either place. It is also likely that various ecumenical movements will draw these churches even closer together as time passes and prophecy advances in Europe. In fact, this is already happening.

Consider! What are people in the WCG currently feeling? Also, are the terrible attitudes found among the splinters found there? Absolutely not—but why? Again ask: How do those still in the WCG feel, and how do they view their leaders? They feel *enlightened—liberated* by new “truth”—“transformed.” They feel thankful that they have grown out of previous “errors” taught to them by Mr. Armstrong and, correspondingly, they feel quite thankful *to their leaders*, who have taken them in their new direction.

This view includes former brethren who have left the WCG and headed for Protestant churches. These are generally filled with joy, even exuberance. To them, the future looks bright. The world now looks cozy and warm as they “discover” over two billion new “fellow Christians.” The “love” that they feel for their new “Jesus” (II Cor. 11:4) must seem overflowing at times. Yes, they may still hold resentment deep inside

toward Mr. Armstrong—but this may be overshadowed by sympathy for him or a feeling that he would have “come to see these things for himself given time, so we must be forgiving of the ‘error’ he taught us.” I have heard this.

So, these former friends feel wonderful about the bright path into “new truths” they have taken. It could be said, the devil is also satisfied with them. For now, in a sense, they have his “blessing.”

Now let’s turn the coin over and examine those who stood up for the truth (in full or in part). An entirely different picture emerges! How do *these* people feel? Also, how do they feel toward their former leaders? They feel betrayed—lied to—sold out! In some cases, they have been victimized by this process several times in various organizations. They are now suspicious and mistrustful and feeling a need to “watch-dog” everyone. Amidst this already unstable environment, we must add that there are tares, flatterers, false brethren, false teachers and false prophets, and those who would “kill and think they do God service” (John 16:2). In addition, of those who *are* converted, prophecy reveals that the great majority are now lukewarm.

We have just described the conditions creating a climate ripe for and filled with “offense, betrayal, hatred and lawlessness.” Christ understood this 2,000 years ago, and that these are the natural by-products of apostate leaders defecting from the truth and God, and betraying God’s people wholesale.

Do you understand this?

Now also re-add Satan’s influence in a very different way within the splinters and slivers. He comes armed with all his “devices,” as the “accuser of the brethren” and a “roaring lion” toward all converted people there, with no interest in “blessing” them or their organizations. And prophecy plainly states that his agents will only grow steadily *worse* (II Tim. 3:13)!

It is vital to recognize that the devil (Matt. 13:24-30) sows tares among the wheat. The Bible is plain about this. Of course, all the “wheat” departed from the WCG. Remember, tares remain with the wheat *until the harvest*. This means that probably the deadliest tares departed *with* the wheat and entered the splinters, because only *there* can the devil continue to use them to attack, destroy, divide, confuse and generally cause mayhem among God’s people. Can you see how their presence plays a pivotal role in the conditions that Jesus foretold in Matthew 24?

Can you also now understand why the organization that holds to all of God’s doctrines is most squarely in harm’s way, and that the “die is cast” regarding attacks we can expect?

In one extreme instance, just before resigning from our staff, one man actually bragged openly to another employee about his experience in the use of “campaign tactics.” He explained that he was “trained to be skilled in the ability to take anything he does, or any situation he is involved in, and spin it in whatever direction necessary for his benefit so that he would come out on top.” He boasted that he was “skilled in deflecting blame from himself and pinning it on others.” It took time, but his sins caught up with him in a big way.

In one sense, the entire age had *trained*—and *conditioned*—this man to think as he did!

People who are determined to spread mayhem, confusion and destruction can now do so at the speed of electricity, with just a computer and an Internet connection. Not only has knowledge increased, as Daniel prophesied, but access to it is now *instantaneously* available around the world. Whether that knowledge is good or bad makes no difference—it is accessible immediately. This allows people to attack, get mad, go to pieces, demand answers or even quit the Church, well before Headquarters could ever respond—even if we were determined to try to do so, and we are not.

This is part of what Christ meant when He said, in Luke 21:19, “In your *patience* possess you your souls [lives].” In a world of instantaneous knowledge, where breaking events carry the potential for tremendous upheaval and confusion, only the most patient will wait for the facts. (How often in the world of political rhetoric do you observe people who are swayed by the first politician or candidate to get their attention with a story?)

Recognize that the future holds many uncertainties that will strike like “thieves in the night.” Christ’s coming is not the only event to occur in this way. Others—many of them bad, and some very bad—will also happen without notice. When they do, there will be two common responses: (1) “In your patience possess you your life” or (2) go to pieces and “lose it,” usually to one’s own destruction.

You must determine how you will handle this endless stream of “thief in the night” events foretold to strike all of God’s people from now throughout the time described by Daniel as “when many will be tried, purified and made white.” When you are ambushed—blindsided—by things that you never could have anticipated you must be prepared.

You must be ready to face a choice.



# THE QUESTION OF ANSWERING

Since every servant of God either has or will face persecution—probably numerous times—through their Christian journey, the central question arises: “What to do?” In practical fact, the Christian has to have a position on the reality he faces.

Political opponents and political parties routinely attack each other within the governments of men (most often democracies). This requires clever “public relations” officers, to be able to deny, deflect, obfuscate, “clarify” or in some other fashion answer the existing charge. The world of politics demands a “response.”

But the Christian has a choice.

## **Only Two Options**

When one is accused, only TWO OPTIONS exist: One, respond to the charges—usually triggering an ongoing, and sometimes endless, back-and-forth exchange, accomplishing nothing. Two, sit silent and passive—which will inevitably be considered either arrogance and proof of guilt, or cavalier and uncaring. So the issue becomes a kind of catch-22, with both options, humanly speaking, carrying big liabilities for the accused. The victim usually cannot win.

Anyone who has ever been falsely accused can understand the tremendous temptation to “set the record straight”—to jump in and bat down falsehoods with the real facts. No one likes to be attacked or

accused. But when this happens, what should a Christian do? There have been times in the past when I was sorely tempted to write an answer refuting a false accusation. There have also been times when I answered my accusers. It rarely did any good.

Why?

Perhaps this excerpt from a letter sent to me at a time when I was under intense false accusation explains it best. It eloquently describes the task of trying to neutralize false accusations: “It is harder to endure a false accusation than a true one because a true accusation can be repented of. However, a false accusation you can only try to repudiate and no one seems to believe you anyway. Maybe this is what God meant when He said His people would endure ‘persecution for My Name’s sake.’ After all, isn’t [all] persecution unjust?”

### Persecution Unavoidable

How true. Yet, persecution—sometimes *very intense* persecution, coupled with terrible false accusation—is inseparable from the life of a true follower of Christ. The Bible teaches, in II Timothy 3:11-12 (where Paul was speaking of himself), “...what persecutions I endured: but out of them *all* the Lord delivered me. Yes, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Do you believe this scripture? It is plain, and leaves no “wiggle room” for Christians to avoid what Paul said happens to “ALL.” Thankfully though, God always delivered him—from *all* persecution! He will do the same for all others who trust Him.

The next two verses in II Timothy 3 are particularly instructive for Christians living in the end time. It is no accident that they follow the subject of persecution in context.

Notice: “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (vs. 13). Verse 14 explains what Christians must do when victimized by attacks: “But continue you in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, KNOWING OF WHOM YOU HAVE LEARNED THEM.” Each spirit-begotten person has a personal responsibility in this.

Paul did not answer his accusers. He recognized that nothing in God’s Word states that constant explanations should be given to counter persecution and accusations. You will not find this anywhere in the Bible. A Christian’s “answer” to attacks today is to continue steadfastly holding to—“continuing in”—the truths we learned from God through Mr. Armstrong.

### Rumors

I have been forced to accept that many false and outrageous rumors have circulated about me since the beginning of The Restored Church of God, and really long before. Partly as a result, a variety of people have repeatedly “prophesied”—and some actively *sought*—our destruction virtually since our inception. These rumors are ridiculous and some are actually the very opposite of the truth.

Here *is* the truth. Although we never trust in size or numbers in God’s Church, steady growth occurs continually. We also receive an encouraging and rapidly growing number of regular inquiries from across the world, and this has been happening (and increasing) for a long time. Though we certainly lost some bitter, accusative people at our Headquarters very early in our development, and occasionally thereafter, we continue to see significant annual growth. The peace and unity (Psa. 133) that we enjoy in all of our local congregations, including Headquarters, is truly extraordinary, with brethren everywhere around the world almost invariably staying for hours after Sabbath services. It has been wonderful to see so many of God’s people standing together in complete unity. This is simply not experienced in the same way in other groups. Jude 12 speaks of “feasts of charity [love],” and this has become a model for what our Sabbaths are like wherever brethren are together.

But, again, with absolutely no warning whatsoever, some whom I thought I knew well chose at our outset to walk away because they could not have things their way. Decisions were not being made the way these people thought that they should—by our first seeking input *from them*. They exploded with a series of distorted charges, mostly stemming from disappointment over one local member who was no longer going to be hired, and another who was no longer going to be used in the same way. In the end, they simply did not see the big picture of what God was doing. Of course, this is the end of the age and surprise defections must be expected. Sadly, and this is also to be expected, they took their attack to the Internet.

(The interested reader may wish to read the thorough brochure *Do You Know “David Pack”?* – *My Life and Ministry—Rumors and Lies vs. Facts and Truth*. From time to time, when circumstances called for it, Mr. Armstrong would explain the details of a situation that was either misunderstood or misrepresented. I have followed his pattern in this regard. Of course, some rumors are so ludicrous and bizarre that they do

not merit attention. For the fuller picture, my two-volume biography is also available.)

### Answering Every Charge

In Matthew 24, Christ was asked, “What shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?” Later, He said, “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another” (vs. 10). In verse 12, He added, “And because iniquity shall abound, the *love* of many shall wax [grow] *cold*.” In such an age, if one were to try to address every accusation, the process would be endless. After each answer had been given, in the end, it would have done no real good. After all, would you not expect that people who invent outrageous charges would also invent clever denials of their victim’s explanations?

Of course, they would.

If I took the time to answer *every* charge against me, from now until Christ returns, Satan will have effectively rendered me useless as God’s tool, no longer able to serve His people—tied up in an endless process accomplishing very little. This policy may offend those who expect me to answer every accusation that human beings can dream up. (Foolishly, of course, some organizations do try to answer to the people in this way.) But I have learned that if I were able to satisfy such people, who may leave or reject God’s Church if not given an “adequate explanation,” then if they *did* receive such an explanation, it would probably only last until the next attack against me or the Church, requiring yet another “adequate explanation.” Besides, doing this is physically and emotionally exhausting, and consumes great amounts of time. Christ asked, “Are there not twelve hours in a day?”

How do I feel when falsely accused—or when others of our ministers experience this? Jesus taught that “BLESSED are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say ALL MANNER OF EVIL against you falsely, for My sake. REJOICE, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets...” (Matt. 5:11-12).

I have had to *learn* over the years to feel “blessed” and to “rejoice,” and to be “exceeding glad” in the face of slander and accusation. Why? Because I have had to make many unpopular decisions throughout my ministry. As a result, “all manner of evil” charges *have* been said against me falsely, effectively *forcing* me—and our staff—to focus on our *reward*! In The Restored Church of God, we do this, and teach others to do the same!

### Suppose I Did Answer?

What might happen if I answered every charge or accusation leveled at me or God's Church? The answer is what *has* happened when people attempt to do this—it generates an even *more* vicious response from the accuser. I have watched people, whom I knew and loved dearly, literally EXPLODE with venom, in ways that were stunning!

Accusers do this because they *must* re-justify their position when they feel threatened by a plausible response to their charges. Of course, almost no one *thinks* his charges are implausible. That is why Solomon wrote, "All the ways of a man are right [and clean] in his own eyes" (Prov. 16:2; 21:2). If people level a charge, no matter how false it may be, they have probably long since brought themselves to believe it. Once this has happened, it usually pours out unchecked, accompanied by a spirit of emotional offensive mixed with defensiveness. Now attackers have staked their reputation on it. They must defend their charges because they are vested in them, and because their "honor" is at stake. Interestingly, such people will usually bring themselves to believe that *they* are now being attacked, merely because the person they attacked did not roll over and accept it.

Anyone who constantly answers silly accusations is unwise, because this will usually incite the accuser to invent *worse* charges.

### Christ Fiercely Attacked

Jesus Christ was called demon-possessed, treasonous, drunkard, friend of publicans and sinners, blasphemer, bastard, heretic, ignorant and more all through His ministry. Of course, these are terrible charges to level at anyone. But Jesus was *perfect*. Yet, this did not stop Him from being crucified. So, can any *imperfect* human realistically hope to avoid persecution?

Since the Bible declares that the "just shall live by faith," applying Matthew 5:11-12 becomes a supreme test. When vilified, Christians are *required* to have faith as they apply this verse. Peter explained that when Christ was reviled He "reviled not back again" (I Pet. 2:21-24). The way He handled His own suffering was for our example. Do you believe these verses? As explained, I have had people attack me suddenly and unexpectedly, publicly airing grievances that they believed others had a "right" or "need" to know. At such moments, my faith was really put to the test!

Every Christian must accept that, just as Jesus explained, "If they have persecuted Me, they *will* persecute *you*." No exceptions to this rule for

Christians are given. In one sense, *not* being periodically attacked or falsely accused becomes its own genuine cause for concern, and to ask, “Why am I an exception?”

Therefore, when people request a formal “response” to personal accusations, *this book*, along with my previously mentioned biography and related brochure, is our only answer!

Nevertheless, God’s people live in an evolving world, one where trends and conditions are continually altered and modified by forces at work on societies. Ostriches may bury their heads in the sand and Polyannas may deny obvious realities, but the one led by an abundance of God’s Spirit walks with eyes and ears wide open.

The Christian examines, understands—truly comprehends—and accepts the new “playing field” he faces.

## THE “RULES” HAVE CHANGED

The arrival of the Internet, coupled with a long-time American institution, has forever changed communication and the “rules” within the Church of God. Let me explain.

I was blessed to inherit a company from my parents’ labor (which I sold five years later in 2000). At any given time, we employed a number of people. Sometimes we hired applicants. Sometimes we let employees go. Sometimes we interviewed people and did not hire them. In the world, this is routine—standard. There were reasons why we hired, did not hire, or released people. Sometimes employees were unhappy in their job, sometimes they performed badly, etc. Normally, they just moved on. Of course, none of this is a revelation. All understand it. Most people in the world go about their business as usual when they change jobs—and it also used to be much the same in God’s Church when people joined or left its fellowship.

When Mr. Armstrong was alive, people also left the Church on a regular basis. In the late 60s and early 70s, the WCG lost about 600 members per year. While this may *seem* high, it was *growing* at 6 to 8 times this rate—so no one thought much about it. By the time Mr. Armstrong died, the Church was averaging about 20 baptisms per day—600 per month—7,200 per year. This growth was *12 times* the number *leaving* the Church! Again, none thought much about the large numbers of people quietly leaving every year because it was a small percentage of the total. Many, many more were replacing them, and this was the Church’s overall focus.

There were not at that time the two major factors that are now affecting departures: The Church had not yet been through *the apostasy*, and *personal computers* had not yet “blossomed” into all that they would become.

Together, these changed everything. When disruptions now occur in the Church, everybody has a “story” to tell. The Internet provides them with a vehicle to do this. And dirtmongers are only too eager to help them. When Daniel said, “knowledge shall be increased” in the end time, he could not have remotely understood how the computer would play such a large role in this.

### Freedom of the Press

Compounding the problem, America and other countries practice the principle of “freedom of the press.” While this has never been *God’s* way, it *is* certainly the *American* and modern way. The American Bill of Rights ensures that the flow of “information”—good or bad, right or wrong—can never stop. Therefore, Americans (and citizens of nearly every Western nation) consider access to information not just a privilege but a right. They could not imagine life without all of the various written materials that are made available through this freedom—and the Freedom of Information Act has allowed them to access vast additional amounts of once inaccessible material!

The attitude that people are entitled to *complete* “openness” from all institutions of government has been absorbed into the splinters. An expectation has developed that visiting certain websites, or reading “church culture” newspapers, is how to get the *real story*. Now, “investigative reporters” take it upon themselves to “just report the news” happening in the splinters. They view themselves as neutral or acting on God’s behalf, while distributing every conceivable kind of garbage, filth, muck, sewage, dirt and trash landing on their desks!

Obviously, these “journalists” are not dirtmongers in their own eyes. They see themselves as merely performing an “information service.” But they function much like the *National Enquirer*, *The Star* or other super-market tabloids, so popular today. The difference is that they do this on behalf of the many splinters, assuring themselves that God is pleased with their efforts. Actually, these “journalists” directly serve the “god of this world,” who loves gossip, talebearing, slander, bad news, discord, division and every other form of human disagreement. While God hates these things, the devil and human nature feast on them. But try to tell them God hates what they are doing.



Additionally, most of these “information services” *link* their websites and newspapers. One “service” may specialize in muck, while another specializes in dirt. Still another in sewage, while yet another features trash and garbage. But since they all “cross-pollinate,” one need only stumble onto one source to find a veritable treasure trove of every vile thing under the sun—instantly available!

You must come to see that, in a host of ways, these sources have rejected Christ’s most basic teachings, and have departed from even the fringes of marginal true Christianity.

### What If...?

Let’s present the destructive potential offered by the Internet today in a different light, using a little bit of humor and author’s license for sake of illustration. Let’s play “What if...?” by supposing that the Internet existed through all ages, and that postings regarding biblical accounts were still available to members of the Church today.

The apostle Paul reported in II Timothy 4:14 that he was attacked by Alexander the coppersmith “who did him much evil.” (We will look at this reference later in the book in another context.) Of course, Paul offers no details beyond this statement about the specifics of what happened. But let’s ask: What if Alexander had been able to post his side of the story on the Internet at the time? How many brethren then would have felt they needed to read “Alexander’s side” of the matter before they could support an apostle? More important for us, how many among God’s people today would resist the tendency to study this evil man’s mind because it was still “archived on the net”?

Paul also spoke of two men named Hymenaeus and Philetus whose “word does eat like a cancer.” How many in the splinters today would feel that they needed to see this for themselves, if their “word” was still available on “*hymenaeusandphiletus.com*”? How many brethren would permit this “cancer” into their heads where it would have an opportunity to take root and spread?

How many would be tempted to read more about Jannes’ and Jambres’ perspective from their website on why Egypt was not such a bad place to live, and the “garlic and leeks” there were the best in the world? Would Paul’s report that they had “corrupt minds” (II Tim. 3:8) be sufficient for you to stay away from them?

How many of God’s people would find it impossible to resist Korah’s explanation on his website of why Moses *really was* “taking too much upon [himself]” as the leader over Israel? Take a moment to read

this account in Numbers 16, and ask yourself how this would “play in Peoria” today. Do you doubt that some in the age of Laodicea—which you probably realize by now means “the people rule, judge and decide”—would need to “see for themselves” if he really did rebel, or if Moses just spun it that way because he had the upper hand as the one used to record the book of Numbers, and because he was the one “in charge” in ancient Israel?

Similarly, how many would feel that they needed to know the “real story,” available on Cain’s website, of what Abel had done that threatened him so badly that circumstances forced him to “kill his brother” in “self-defense”?

What about getting Balaam’s side of events, about how the donkey he was riding could not have been used of God because it had the “attitude of a jackass”? What if the bereaved widow “Mrs. Goliath,” with the rest of her family, had an inside story to tell about the illegal “secret weaponry” that David had access to that in fact put her husband at a *disadvantage*? How many today would then believe a version that Goliath was really “minding his own business” when “David went out of control in a murderous rage”?

How many would check out King Herod’s website to see his protestations of innocence regarding charges of slaughtering so many babies and little children around the time of Jesus’ birth?

How many would let curiosity pull them to “*judasiscariot.org*,” if this were possible? Have no doubt that the number of visitors to this website would be staggering, and that it would probably become one of the most popular ever.

Do any doubt that Absalom would have employed the use of a website to assist in his plot to seize the kingdom from his father (David)? Do not be under any illusions. Large numbers of “brethren” would visit this site today, just as surely as thousands in the Church who should have known better found themselves wanting to hear what *Mr. Armstrong’s* disfellowshipped son had to say, even after he had been fired for obvious rebellion, false teaching and massive personal sin. Of course, two or three thousand were already deceived by him 30 years ago and followed his revolt, with even more going with him over time.

Let’s take this to the ultimate degree. Suppose Satan had his own website or newspaper, and that it was explicitly labeled as such. Do any doubt that thousands would be unable to resist “just seeing what he had to say” about events today, all the while assuring themselves that they could not possibly be deceived because the devil was “identifying himself upfront”?

### Have No Doubt

Presenting these examples in a somewhat humorous way is done to help bring the realism of what would happen if reports from all these Bible figures were available. Do not doubt for a moment that much more than the little that I have described here would become the subjects of endless debates between an equally endless number of camps of opinion that would form around these fictional websites. And there would almost certainly be other websites created as a direct result of the debates.

Understand the point. God does not offer the particulars of any of the above biblical scenarios and of many other accounts in the Bible because they are not important! He knows that His servants do not need, and should not want, to know the details of these events. He also knows the many kinds of twisted opinions and thinking these Bible figures would offer, if given the opportunity through today’s technology. You should also know this.

Do not kid yourself that if the opinions and musings of all these (in) famous Bible personalities were available on easily accessible websites that thousands in the splinters would not be eagerly reading their reports—and if these men were still alive to periodically “update” their sites, many would *regularly* peruse those sites to see what was the latest posting. The result would be doubt, suspicion, accusation, division and an almost incalculable amount of confusion—via plain gossip—being spewed throughout the splinters.

In reality, all of what has been described here is exactly what *is happening today*. Only the names have been changed.

Do you care what Internet and junk “news-mongers” have to say? Do you enjoy “surfing” through refuse? If so, then you are endorsing these people’s right to mudsling, and you are opening your mind to the thinking of the devil’s most perverse agents. This means that you love what God HATES! Be careful that He does not find you with “itching ears” seeking “teachers” of vile, rotten, awful stories—whether true or false!

Remember, if there were no willing *ears*, there could be no talebearing *mouths*!

### The Buck Stops Here

Today, when things do not go as what many who are thought to be brethren wish, some respond as would the world. The “bad guy” is almost

invariably the minister—or the man in charge at Headquarters—because “the buck stops” there.

Since I am the leader of The Restored Church of God, I recognize that the buck stops with me. I also realize that my decisions may not always be popular. But I have no intention of routinely responding to disgruntled ex-members, ex-ministers or ex-employees. I intend to do what Mr. Armstrong did. Fortunately, he did not have to contend with the Internet, where people can so easily air their distorted grievances. He continued to even more strongly and boldly teach the truth and do the Work, understanding that people who were fastened to *that* would not have time to or interest in the stories about him.

### “Going Postal”

A new phenomenon has appeared in America—the “fired postal-worker syndrome.” Terminated employees are now sometimes said to have “gone postal.” At one point, in Honolulu, an employee, angry over his announced termination, shot and killed seven people. The next day, a similar incident occurred in a Seattle fish market. The very day after that, another incident occurred in Brazil—and so on.

In today’s awful, violent generation, this is a scene that plays out often. Thinking themselves victims of injustice, ex-employees are driven by insane rage to go on a murderous rampage, seeking to cause as much mayhem, destruction, confusion and death as possible. It is as though someone must pay for whatever happened to them—and it is often the boss and fellow workers. Of course, terrorists now carry out these same things in a vastly more extreme and coordinated way around the world.

We have long known that events and trends in the world are eventually reflected in the Church—and that there are many ways in which this is true. These trends are affecting God’s people much more than they realize. You need to see conditions for what they are!

In the past, within the Church, when someone terminated an employee, that person, although often upset and sometimes to the point of walking away from everything, would simply get another job. Today, however, some ex-employees “go wild” and “lose it,” often resulting in a murderous rampage of slander. God’s Church today has lived through several such rampages by people who did not get what they wanted or who secretly harbored doctrinal disagreements. They used the Internet as their weapon of choice. While they failed, these experiences taught us! They should also teach you!

### Smiting Fellow Servants

In Matthew 24, Jesus described other signs preceding His Return. Verses 48 to 51 describe those who fall into the thinking of “My Lord delays His coming.” Such people seem to assume that this age will continue indefinitely. Jesus states that this mindset brings with it wrong forms of conduct—that certain people cease to LIVE the Christian way. This is the real problem described here.

Many seem to think that all Church problems in the end time are *doctrinal*, but this is not true! Actually, Matthew 24 describes problems of Christian behavior *and* of doctrinal belief. Christ knew that where either one exists, the other soon appears. Notice that He referenced the “*evil servants*” who “begin to beat their *fellow servants*, and to eat and drink with the drunken” (vs. 49). These verses depict grave CONDUCT problems in some called “brethren.” Incredibly, such people usually still see themselves as God’s servants! Of course, they will not be ready for Christ’s Return and will lose out on eternal life. Jesus literally says of these that He “will cut [them] in two.” This is a serious warning for all who wish to understand and avoid what is happening throughout the splinters in the end-time.

Jesus promised, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against [the Church]” (Matt. 16:18). We believe this. But, when members or ministers leave, we now *expect* some of them to try to subtly destroy us. When necessary, some will “invent evil things” (Rom. 1:30). They will also try to gather like-minded people to validate themselves. If they fail to achieve their end, some will *intensify* their attack, and we EXPECT them to smite their former fellow servants. You must understand this!

Christ compared the “last days” to the “days of Noah.” Genesis 6 reveals that the chief characteristic of that time was “the earth was *filled* with VIOLENCE.” We should *expect* at least some *spiritual* “violence” to be directed toward the Church.

This enormous prophecy has been forgotten!

### Hurt Feelings

There are a long list of reasons brethren may leave or have to be put out of the Church (and the latter has been extremely rare). The same is true of employees. Try to imagine how many things can occur when dealing with human beings in *any* setting. Now make the setting a Church headquarters office or congregation. There can be hurt feel-

ings, jealousy, insubordination, taking sides, people wanting their own way, inexperience, lying, incompetence, negligence, presumptuousness, bitterness, hate, doctrinal disagreement, contention, pride (which Proverbs 13:10 says brings contention), politics and jockeying for position, inflexibility, impatience, anger, over-familiarity, stressful conditions, resentment, criticism, differences of opinion, dysfunctional marriages or family life being brought to the office, personality clashes, etc. (We are very blessed in that we have only a tiny fraction—virtually none—of *any* of these kinds of problems.)

There are endless things that can and do contribute to problems in an office setting. Those living or working together—and actually experiencing the problems—cannot always understand or solve them. How, then, can people far away even remotely understand what is happening? The answer is simple—they cannot! More importantly, God has not appointed them to try. But they do anyway—often to their own and others' hurt!

### **Believing Accusers**

The dynamics of how and why people believe accusations is fascinating. Almost invariably, they believe, and *look for*, whatever *confirms* their own feelings. They basically view information in a way that strengthens their *current* belief or position. Dynamite will not change one who believes that he has sufficient “facts” to confirm what he has *already decided*. If you see this natural tendency in yourself, you are part of a special small minority.

## MR. ARMSTRONG FACED RELENTLESS ATTACK

When I was first writing this book, a long, vicious email arrived that had been sent to 40 others by a bitter person. Its sole purpose was to assassinate Mr. Armstrong's character in the most awful way. Tragically, the writer seemed to conjure up every evil motive that she could attribute to virtually everything that he might have ever said, thought or done! Interestingly, due to a quirk of human nature, the author, in the end, was probably describing her own character. Though I did not know this woman, she chose to "enlighten" me without my solicitation. Such is our time.

In the years I knew Mr. Armstrong, he privately expressed some of the things about which people were attacking him. While these charges never deterred him, they certainly did sober him. Some of what was said about him was so outrageous, so appalling, that it did occasionally affect him. This was particularly true when such slander came from those he felt he had known and trusted for a long time.

I am very thankful that I saw this part of Mr. Armstrong's character and leadership—how he handled attacks on his person. It caused me to develop tremendous respect for his great strength of will in the face of extreme persecution. I watched accusation, slander and character assassination actually empower, strengthen and drive him on, with attacks seeming to forge and galvanize his will. Since I have also been attacked over principle and doctrine many times throughout my ministry, I have tried to practice his steady example, allowing accusa-

tions and false charges to strengthen and even inspire me. Like Mr. Armstrong, I have learned to see them for what they are—including who is behind them.

Like David, when his son Absalom conspired against him, I have learned that the worst attacks generally come from those who are close to the victim. How often did Mr. Armstrong's *family* attack and even threaten to destroy him?

Judas kissed Christ and had charge of the treasury when he betrayed Him for money. Whether it is David, Mr. Armstrong or Christ, it is usually those closest to the accused who perpetrate the attack. Directly related, I have noticed that it is often those to whom I have tried to be the *most* giving, patient or merciful who so quickly turn and smite the Church or me. As with Mr. Armstrong, familiarity bred contempt. In the end, kindness is often used against the one extending it.

Now let me tell you about a strangely *encouraging* letter I received. Follow my reasoning carefully. This one included a long list of 54 separate charges made directly against Mr. Armstrong. It happened to arrive when *I* was under a severe attack.

This list was so vile, awful, dark and Satanic, as to defy one person's ability to do all the things of which he was accused—even *if he tried!* And I thought of rumors that I had heard about Mr. Armstrong that were not on this list. The person who sent me the letter said it took him only *13 minutes* to construct it from various websites. He wrote that he found "more...much more" that he could have included. The message for me was obvious.

Of course, the sender did *not* agree with the charges, but had used them to show that if the one who was Christ's apostle, *and* a type of Moses, could be accused of such things, then what was said of me was pitiful by comparison. I *was* encouraged and decided that I should be embarrassed to feel sorry for myself, considering what was said about Mr. Armstrong—or others of God's servants before him. Of course, I *am* concerned for any who could be shaken or turned away by false charges about me or the Church.

Mr. Armstrong simply never answered his accusers. He knew that each time he was attacked, God somehow always later blessed him in a greater way, often immediately following the attack. We have seen the same pattern here. The more we are accused, slandered and attacked, the more we seem to thrive, and it seems that the more people prophesy our demise, the faster we grow. We have come to expect that when attacks occur, God is (and has been) readying us for some greater task!



### Mr. Armstrong and Employees

Did Mr. Armstrong ever deal with disgruntled or dissident people at Headquarters? He did—numerous times! The Church had 1,200 employees at one point, and all of them had human nature. Consider this quote explaining his policy. Though written nearly 40 years ago, its towering wisdom is timeless:

“What organization, church, college or important enterprise is there which does not have a few—possibly former members or employees, or those who have had some former contact—who are dissidents, hostile and bitter or prejudiced?

“It seems those who, for a sensational story of broadcast, attack this Work, seek out only those very few dissident and bitter enemies of the Work, and are willing to broadcast or print every defaming thing these enemies will say against us without checking the facts. They never seem interested in checking with the 75,000 members and many thousand other Co-Workers. They imply false motives, employ clever and deceptive innuendoes, and give false and misleading impressions...

“Co-Workers, this wouldn't BE the very Work of God UNLESS it was being persecuted! Our persecutors themselves PROVE this is the very Work of God! We do not invite persecution. We try to avoid it. But the living Christ and YOUR BIBLE says we will get persecution and false accusation. In this world, we have to expect at the best, careless journalism, and at the worst, irresponsible journalism.

“Let us remember we are mindful of the assurance of our very Savior: ‘Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. REJOICE, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you’ (Matthew 5:10-12).

“This very persecution INSPIRES us to GO FORWARD with renewed enthusiasm, faith, and determination! Our God is still on His Throne. The living Christ will never leave nor forsake us. Let us never forsake Him. He is constantly opening more and greater doors to get His Work going to more and more people with increased IMPACT! Let's follow where He leads, in HIS POWER!”

*Co-worker Letter, May 25, 1972*

All readers should draw strength from this quote and the others to follow.

### Mr. Armstrong's Policy

Most people are completely unaware that Mr. Armstrong long held the policy of not answering his accusers and stated it more than once. Consider not only *what* he said but also *why* he said it. The Restored Church of God is determined to hold to what Mr. Armstrong taught—with this including even practical matters of good judgment—and he taught the policy of not answering accusers. He did this because *the Bible* teaches it. So will we!

Hear his own words on the matter (*italics mine*):

“April 25th I sent you the most difficult and painful announcement I have ever had to make in a Co-Worker letter. Since then certain newspapers, publications and broadcasts have made scurrilous, deceptive and misleading attacks on the Work of God, filled with fallacious, distorted, exaggerated and false accusations.

*“It has never been our practice to answer false accusers or persecutors, nor to attack or accuse others.*

“1941 years ago, the chief priests, elders and all the Council at Jerusalem sought false witnesses against Jesus, to put Him to death. (Matt. 26:59) ‘At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto Him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it, which these witness against thee? But Jesus held His peace.’ Jesus did not answer His false accusers. He was not hung in effigy—HE WAS CRUCIFIED in person AND KILLED!

“This is HIS WORK! He, the resurrected, living Jesus Christ, is the HEAD of this Work. He guides, directs, and inspires it through the power of the Holy Spirit. Its FRUITS bear ample witness. Christ’s own Gospel is preached and proclaimed to the MILLIONS as a witness worldwide. Thousands of lives have been changed, made happy, received God’s Holy Spirit, made heirs of God and Joint-heirs with Christ, to inherit eternal life.

“Jesus Christ is IN this Work. He said He would never leave nor forsake it. But, on the other hand, He also said, ‘If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you...’ But, again, the Apostle Paul wrote: ‘If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:17-18)..."

"The Church of God was persecuted, almost from the beginning. At the beginning of the 8th chapter of the Book of Acts, two years after founding of the Church of God, it is recorded: 'And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.'

"Later, when the Apostle Paul arrived in Rome, the Jews there said to him, regarding the church, 'as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against' (Acts 28:22)."

*Co-worker Letter, May 25, 1972*

Let's examine one more of Mr. Armstrong's statements, this time in the form of a question and answer of over forty years ago:

"QUESTION: '*Why don't you answer critics, persecutors, and accusers PUBLICLY?*' ANSWER: As Jesus said, if we were of this world – part of it – a participant in its ways, and its religious teachings and ways – the world would love us, for it loves its own. But we are not of this world, and we speak not its doctrines and false gospels, but that of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, 'If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you.' SO, we do receive some persecution. Satan is the accuser of the brethren in Christ (Rev. 12:10). His ministers pose as ministers of Christ (II Cor. 11:13-15), but they do the works of Satan (John 8:44). 'When he (Jesus) was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing' (Matt. 27:12). We are HIS servants, following His steps – therefore we, likewise, answer nothing. And we do not accuse or persecute others!!

"Jesus said we shall be known, *not by words, either of accusation, or defense*, but **BY THE FRUITS PRODUCED**. We are commissioned to '**PREACH THE WORD**' which we do fearlessly – *not to accuse others, or engage in controversy and debate*. We are commanded to 'strive not about words to no profit' (II Tim. 2:14), but to '**PREACH THE WORD**' (II Tim. 4:2) which we do... Those are the fruits. While persecutors waste time persecuting and falsely accusing, the Living Jesus Christ guides, blesses, and prospers this Work. We must be about our Father's business, *not getting into arguments with false accusers*. If you want to know about us, or this Work, **ASK US** – not the enemies of the true Gospel – and we'll tell you the **TRUTH**."

*Letter to all employees and brethren, May 25, 1965*

We have been forced to live the wisdom of Mr. Armstrong's policy. I found his reasons instructive, and we intend to continue in his wisdom. This must suffice for all who would have me constantly "address the specifics" of future charges.

Mr. Armstrong was attacked throughout his life. I will not let myself think that it could—or will—be different for me. This is because of my office, and because we teach the exact same truths that the apostles and prophets of ages past taught. God's Church is determined to retain *all* Bible truths in their precise detail. We are the one organization that makes no exceptions. Many groups SAY they make no exceptions and then proceed to list the exceptions to their "no exception" rule. But Mr. Armstrong would never compromise God's truth—neither shall we!

Satan's hatred for people who teach and live God's truth is in DIRECT PROPORTION TO HOW MUCH TRUTH THEY TEACH AND LIVE! Since we do not intend to ever compromise the restored doctrines of God, we are prepared to suffer his almost continual wrath.

## HOW THE ACCUSED WOULD RESPOND

There is one more element of answering accusers that speaks to the obvious—or at least it should explain the obvious.

Most people never actually think through what would happen if a leader (in any setting, the world or the splinter) were confronted with allegations about his conduct of character. They do not seem to understand basic human nature, and how it would control any answers given.

We need to understand a simple dynamic.

### **Just Suppose**

Let's play the game of "just suppose." I have done this in one or two other books to the splinters, and it serves our purpose here.

Suppose you heard terrible things about a leader of any organization in the splinters that you were considering joining. (Include me in this scenario.) Now suppose that those things had to do with any one or several of the following things: stealing, lying, adultery, abusive behavior, Sabbath-breaking, etc.

You decide to approach the man. He agrees to talk with you. You express your concerns to him. Then comes the moment of "truth"—you ask him if the things reported about him are *true*. In other words, "Do you steal third tithe?", "Do you secretly break the Sabbath?", "Are you committing adultery?", "Are you abusive?", etc.

How would you expect the man to answer? Before looking further at this, recognize the following. The things you have heard about the man are either *true* or *false*—he is either innocent or guilty. It must be one or the other, and cannot be both.

I repeat: How would you expect the man to answer? If he is innocent, he will naturally say that he is innocent. But if he is guilty, he will also still say that he is innocent. He will certainly not choose you to receive his sudden, on-the-spot full confession to these sins. Deceitful people should be expected to respond in a manner consistent with their character—they will cover their actions with lies. In other words, a man capable of such conduct—various acts that involve deceit—is certainly not going to suddenly be an *honest* person just because he is now *asked* about his behavior. He is going to lie about what he did or is doing. The man can be *expected* then to give the EXACT SAME ANSWER EITHER WAY—whether guilty or innocent!

Can you see this?

So what would have been the purpose of your exercise? What could it possibly have achieved? Absolutely nothing!

Recall Mr. Armstrong just explained that “fruits” are the test of a man. Of course, he learned this from Christ in Matthew 7:15-20, where He was speaking of false prophets. Christ did not say to *ask* the false prophet if he is false. Of course, a false prophet would say he is TRUE! This goes without saying, and Christ knew it.

So should you!

### **The Test of a Man**

The test of a man then must be by some *other means*. It could not be what the man says or does not say about himself. This includes me.

A vital distinction must be made here. All of a man’s fruits must be determined by a set of criteria subject to independent investigation and corroboration. The man’s assertions about himself play virtually no role in any examination. Christ would never require people to simply “believe the man” as sufficient grounds to follow him. This is what people in the world do with politicians and with *their* ministers.

A person would have to be able to go to a *set standard* and confirm or deny the man’s spiritual credentials. These certainly would—and could—never have anything to do with what “people say.” As we have seen, people can say anything, and usually do. And again, this can include any given man speaking to his own credibility or character—in other words, why you should follow him.

So what then is the FRUIT of a man's ministry? First, and foremost, he does not, and would never, compromise the truth of God. This towers above *all* points. But then there are an array of *other* points, such as the gospel being taken to all nations, and in increasing power, similarly, a warning given to the nations of Israel, conversions occurring, steady growth in size of both the Church and the Work, amount and quality of literature prepared to do the Work, amount and quality of literature to properly feed the flock, blessings of income, the opening of extraordinary doors of opportunity, unusual favor in the eyes of important people or companies, miracles—healings, demons cast out (II Cor. 12:12; Matt. 16:16-20)—among others. Of course, it would be absolutely essential that the man would have a thorough and solid understanding about God's government, and he practices it exactly as it was taught to the Church under Mr. Armstrong.

At least briefly consider a related point to whatever mistakes or sins the man might have committed. The authenticity of God's leading servant (or any of his servants) does not rest on whether he is or has been perfect. Since no one is perfect—without sin (Rom. 3:23)—this could *never* be the standard by which fruits are assessed. And God knows this. Many have felt that Mr. Armstrong could not have been an apostle because of what “people said” about him. While he made mistakes, and certainly committed sins—nothing remotely close to what is reported—none of these could alter the office that he held!

You should take a moment in your mind just to consider the lives of some of God's greatest servants.

### **Accountable to the People?**

In democratic governments, all leaders are ultimately accountable to the people. All of them have been elected through some form of voting. This means that they can either be installed by people, or *removed* by them, if they do not “deliver the goods” that the electorate desires. We must ask: Do God's true ministers and leaders serve either by the will of the people or by the will of other ministers who elected them?

Some of the splinters adopted elective, democratic, “representative” government in place of government from the top down, which Mr. Armstrong taught. We will revisit this later. (It is also covered in much more detail in *The True Church – One Organization, or Many?*, “*Anoint Your Eyes*” – *Christ's Warning to His People*, and in even greater detail in *The Government of God – Understanding Offices and Duties*. As mentioned above, one of the great tests of a man is whether or not he rejects,

compromises or practices faithfully the government of God. This latter book very thoroughly explains that government. These are three of the five most important books to the splinters.)

Referenced earlier, the word *Laodicea*, derived from two key root words, literally means “the people rule, judge or decide.” Many either never understood this or have forgotten it. Consider! The Greek word *laos* means “people.” Then, from the Greek word *dike* comes the English word “decide” or “decision.” This word can also be rendered “rule” or “judge.” Some may argue the nuances of these meanings, but there is no disputing that this is what *Laodicea* means.

Therefore, as referenced earlier, the last era of the Church is best described as the era when THE PEOPLE DECIDE...RULE...JUDGE!

II Peter 2:10 refers to those who “despise *government*” and “speak evil of *dignities*” in the “last days.” An honest look at modern society in most countries of the world presents a startling picture. It has changed radically in recent years. Most people will no longer tolerate much from their governments. The citizenry of western nations do routinely hate government and speak evil of civil offices over them. Look at how many protests fill the news from across the world. In fact, these governments have come to be under virtual siege from a myriad of factions and special interest groups, which are either blaming them for wrongs, demanding action on issues or calling for investigations to “get at the truth.”

“Scandalgates” of every sort have left people deeply cynical and mistrusting of almost all authority. Romans 8:7 states that human nature has never been subject to God and His Law (or any other law). What has always been a natural tendency in human beings has now become much worse in this age. Open rebellion has become the prevailing attitude around the world!

Now look at God’s people. A similar mistrust has developed due to government abuse, scandal and false teaching, beginning at the very top. As a result, many have felt they should take government into *their own hands*. But the membership does *not* rule in God’s Church—GOD DOES! Mr. Armstrong understood that this is one of the greatest teachings in the Bible, and we all once believed it. But a funny thing happened on the way through the apostasy. *Everything* changed! Many came to believe government could only be “kept in check” if members and the ministry (and to a lesser degree, members) actively participated in it themselves!

People now began to trust THEMSELVES—instead of God—to lead His Church. Yet God, through Solomon, declared that “He that trusts in



his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26). Also read Proverbs 16:2 and 21:2. Feeling themselves “burned” too many times, very few any longer trust—have *faith* in!—the all-powerful, living Christ to lead His Church.

This almost certainly includes you.

### God Always Knew

God understood that end-time conditions would spawn the last era of His Church—when the people decide...rule...judge. Therefore, this era appeared right on schedule exactly as God foretold. Nothing is out of control! But, while none of God’s people *should* be confused, most *are*. This need not be.

There has always been one true Church—one organized Body of Christ. There *are*, however, *two* co-existing conditions at the end of the age. One is large and dominant, and the other is small—of “little strength” (Rev. 3:8)! But both groups eventually all reside in the one Church Jesus Christ built.

You must carefully read *The True Church – One Organization, or Many?* This book paints a complete picture of how God’s Church has always been unified, under one government, with all of God’s people—all those who are Spirit-led—in ONE ORGANIZATION. (Of course, the *GOVERNMENT OF GOD* book also relates to this subject.)

Jeremiah spoke of conditions in the modern nations of Israel just prior to Christ’s Return. What he describes is not pretty. In chapter 2, God speaks of an attitude that has developed in the nations of modern-day Israel—the United States, Canada, Great Britain and others.

Carefully notice: “Wherefore [why] say My people, *We are lords*; we will come no more unto You” (vs. 31). The next verse explains that national, physical Israel has “forgotten God days without number.” This prevailing, worldly, end-of-the-age attitude has deeply affected God’s people.

Many are simply no longer willing to let Christ rule His Church, stating about themselves that “I am not into ‘control’ anymore.” Each person wants to be his own lord—“his own man”—with a “nobody’s telling ME what to do” attitude. When things go wrong, most (ministers and laymembers) lash out because *they will not any longer be ruled*. They come to their *own* decisions—their *own* judgments—on almost everything to do with the Church and Work. As a result, the “hatred, betrayal and offense” (Matt. 24:10) that Jesus prophesied would appear in the Church prior to His Return arrived, and in the worst way. It has allowed most to easily justify the “every man for himself” approach to governing the Church. Now, the tail largely wags the dog.

Woe to leaders who will *not* cave to the will of the many “lords” who have come to rule the Church in place of Christ! The pope takes the title *Vicar* (meaning “in place of”) *of Christ*. The age of *many* would-be “Vicars of Christ” has appeared in the splinters. Yet, ironically, when confronted with correction or instruction, it is these very *same* people who will accuse the *minister* of this—of getting between them and Christ!

The result has been that some will now take their individual pastor to task in ways never before seen.

## MATTHEW 18:15 AND MINISTERS

In 1979, the Church of God suffered a “sea change” in how some came to believe that they could supplant Christ’s leadership of His Church through human intervention.

Here is what happened.

In January of that year, six misguided former members of the WCG hired an attorney “to bring Mr. Armstrong to justice” for supposed wrongdoing. These six “relators” (a legal term) took it upon themselves to address what they perceived was “wrong in Pasadena.” They sought a judge’s assistance, and an *ex parte* hearing took place (meaning *without* one of the two parties involved present or even informed of the meeting). The judge appointed a receiver and the infamous assault on the Church ensued. It lasted almost two years and brought many important lessons, almost all of which have been *forgotten* by so many of God’s people!

Outrageous charges of misconduct and mispending were leveled against Mr. Armstrong. These covered supposed offenses so egregious that extraordinary—and truly extreme—measures slammed immediately into place. This was all made possible by the willingness of just *six* Church “brethren” to take matters into their own hands. Of course, they failed. But before they did, their reckless, misguided “zeal” caused major disruption in the Work.

Parallel circumstances exist today. There are now similar “brethren” who feel that it is their prerogative to use Matthew 18:15 to

address perceived misconduct in the ministry. In a terrible misapplication of this verse, some have come to feel that they can gather witnesses and approach a minister with their “charges.” When the accused minister does not accede to and/or “repent” of the charges, these “brethren” then declare him to be “a heathen man and a publican” (vs. 17). (Lower-ranking ministers also occasionally get into the act with their leaders.) They do this by taking it “to the Church,” which means the Internet and anywhere else they can slander him publicly. Writing hideous, untrue letters, they use any and all forums that will help them spread their “charges”—and their “findings.” The goal is to reach as many people as possible in order to assassinate the character of a minister whom they could not control.

The attack can be murderous!

Invariably, some people will eagerly believe the accusations, and even *thank* such people for their efforts. In turn, this confirms to the accuser(s) that a high and noble purpose has been served—people have been “enlightened”—“helped.”

Recognize that the Church *never* understood this verse to mean that brethren, *on their own authority*, could publicly assassinate ministers or other brethren, through “investigation” and “trial.” We have *always* known that the last step of Matthew 18:15 is carried out from the top down—never the bottom up!

### Any Two or Three?

Let’s examine this: Can any two or three brethren remove a minister of God by merely alleging misconduct or false teaching on his part? Could any group of brethren from various parts of the country target a minister whom they did not like or agree with, and actually remove him from office? Does the Bible permit—even authorize—this? Consider! If your answer is either “yes” or “maybe,” then you are saying that *any* minister of God can be held hostage to dissidents in the Church who decide—for *any* reason—that it is in their interest to remove him. This is exactly what one must conclude in order to start a “proceeding” against a particular minister or ministers. If they are indeed *true* ministers, then, in effect, *GOD* can be taken hostage in the same action!

Can you see this?

Now think of how many people do not like or agree with their minister, particularly in this age. There are countless numbers, and a thousand books could be filled with their reasons! Under such thinking, all true ministers would have to spend their entire ministry hoping against

hope that they never offended any two or more people in their pastorates, or they could find themselves the object of Matthew 18:15. Recall Mr. Armstrong's statement quoted earlier about how similar people eventually always seem to find each other.

Do you see the preposterous illogic of such a dissident action? Take it to its limit.

Any two or three people could then have *removed Mr. Armstrong* at any point in his ministry! Again, in 1979, six tried through the world's courts—but FAILED! Would anyone doubt that there were hundreds, or even thousands, of members who wished to remove him over the course of his lifetime? Of course there were! (In reality, the false leaders who succeeded him, and sought to silence the truth, prove this.)

### Apostles Hostage?

Did Matthew 18:15 require an apostle of Christ to sit throughout his ministry—for 55 years—hoping not to offend what would be several people in Denver, Dallas, Dubuque, or Detroit, because this “lynch mob” might have removed him if he had? When thought of this way, it makes even considering the idea ludicrous.

The passage instructs, “Go to your brother,” not “Go to your *minister*.” This is not because ministers are above the law, nor does it mean that you could not talk to your minister if you did not understand one of his actions or decisions. It is because a true minister cannot be removed by any except God Himself, usually through His *faithful* senior ministers. Even then, of course, they must have *right* reasons for doing this! (This becomes its own great reason why God's people must go in search of the government of God and not stop their pursuit until they find it.)

There were numerous men around Mr. Armstrong who wanted to get rid of him. And some worked quietly behind the scenes toward this end. If they had succeeded, God would have literally *lost* His chosen apostle as human leader of His Church. In other words, the Head of the Church would have called and trained His servant for years, in preparation for His great purpose at the end—planned 6,000 years ago—only to watch a handful of rebellious dissidents thwart His entire plan. If you see that people—“brethren” or “ministers”—could never be permitted to do this to Mr. Armstrong, then it should be equally clear that it cannot be done to *any* true minister!

Romans 16:17 does say, however, that brethren are to “*mark* them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you

have learned; *and avoid them.*” We have long understood that “mark” means to “take note of.” Of course, if *any* member *anywhere* was authorized to mark *any* minister for *any* reason (real or imagined) at *any* time, the Church would have immediately descended into *absolute chaos* long ago!

Do you see this?

### Take Note

Brethren certainly should note false or compromising, lukewarm ministers—and avoid them—meaning they should diligently study and hold to the undiluted true doctrines of God. While they ought to be careful in their actions while they apply this, it is a clear biblical command. In fact, all of us did this when we left the WCG. While most no longer will, every Christian must obey Romans 16:17-18. But this passage does not license people or organizations to slander, defame, libel, attack or assassinate a minister whenever *they* see fit. This is the simple truth of how the Church has *always* handled these matters in the past!

One additional point to consider: If a minister is removed by his superiors because he will not stop teaching elements of the truth, in other words, because they cannot compromise him, but he is charged with “dividing the Church” or “sowing discord,” with charges of “misconduct” as “throw-ins” to try to legitimize it, it is a bogus removal. Would Mr. Armstrong have ever allowed ministers to remove him in this fashion, particularly when he knew that their real motivation was *disagreement with his (God’s) teachings*?

I have been either put on trial, fired or demoted a total of 12 times on issues of doctrine and principles of truth. Believe me, I know a “kangaroo court” when I see one. So did Mr. Armstrong. Nevertheless, if I were the devil, I would do everything I could think of to use my agents to set up such a “court” in order to expel an uncompromising, faithful minister anytime I could. Recognize that Satan seeks to do this because he knows some are foolish enough to *believe* his “order of the court” charade.

Do you understand this?

No passage or account in the Bible records “brethren” ever collaborating apart from Headquarters (it must be on track) to remove even a false minister. Hopefully, you now clearly understand *why* no such account exists.

Another factor has come into greater play in recent years and it is growing worse.

### Playing the “Gotcha” Game

Understand this basic fact of Scripture about the men God is using. The Bible records no examples of men risking their lives or reputations to *openly* and fearlessly preach the truth of God, while *secretly* practicing lives full of SIN. However, it *is* full of examples of great servants who did, at times, sin—sometimes in a big way! And it records that they always *repented* just as “big.” But none ever evidenced a life-long *pattern* of secret, deep corruption or immoral conduct, visible to just two, three or a handful of supposed “witnesses.”

Of course, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). I have sinned and will, no doubt, sin again in this lifetime. Perfection has never been God’s standard for whether He will work through a man. If it were, God would never use *anyone* because no one could measure up.

This is the very reason that growing numbers have come to believe that *all* ministers now have disqualified themselves, and “no one has authority over anyone, anymore.”

Psalms 130:3 states, “If You, LORD, should *mark iniquities*...who shall stand?” If the test of Christianity, or one’s—anyone’s—ministry, were perfection, then only Christ would pass it. But God does *not* “mark” iniquities or seek to “get things” on people. Rather, verse 4 says, “But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” God’s MERCY is what leads people to *want* to fear Him.

While God does *not* “mark” sins or “keep score” (I am not referring to a lifelong *pattern* of sin and corruption), again, more people *are* today marking the sins of others. They seem to play an endless game of “gotcha,” only too eager to “cast the first stone” against supposed wrongdoers. Of course, they do not want God to cast stones at *them*. But they seem oblivious to His instructions about not doing it to others. In the end, such people rarely come to recognize their own conduct for what it is. To them, mirrors are to show *others* their sins, not to see the “dirt” on their own faces (Jms. 1:22-25).

This introduces an important account in Christ’s ministry.

### “To Catch Him in His Words”

Jesus was tempted on two occasions by people hoping to catch Him misspeaking. In Mark 12:13, certain Pharisees and Herodians came questioning Christ “to catch Him in His words.” In Luke 11:53-54,

the Scribes and Pharisees “urged vehemently” and “provoked” Christ “to get Him to speak of many things.” These hypocrites tried to get Him to talk a lot. Notice this account states that they were “laying wait for Him, and *seeking to catch something* out of His mouth *that they might accuse Him.*”

God’s leaders are in a difficult position. None have the wisdom to give the perfect answers that Jesus *always* gave. In fact, James 3:2 states of teachers, “For in many things we offend all...if any man offend not *in word*, the same is a perfect man...” Since *no man* is perfect in word, we can expect to say things that are wrong. I certainly do. I believe that I have a little dyslexia, which brings occasional “glitches” and “stutters” to my speaking. I periodically say words that I did not intend to. But then Moses was a stutterer, so I am at least in good company. The point is that anyone seeking to catch me or any minister “in words,” will be able to easily do this. All ministers mis-speak from time to time. Therefore, people looking to catch them will usually succeed.

Some have actually sat for hours, using a computer and a tape recorder, to catch me in mistakes. Sometimes what they extracted was incredible. Pauses in speech, along with context, grammar and inflection disappear (as often does the accuracy) when people reported that they “heard” something. If people tried to catch Christ and Mr. Armstrong in their words, then I can hardly be an exception.

### **Ministers Can Also Be “Sheep Among Wolves”**

In Matthew 10:16, Christ sent His disciples to preach the kingdom of God, heal the sick and cast out demons. Notice what He said to men who would go on to be apostles: “Behold, I send YOU [even apostles] forth as SHEEP in the midst of wolves: be YOU therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But *beware of men*: for they will deliver YOU up to the councils, and they will scourge YOU in their synagogues [churches]...”

You have probably always thought of sheep as sheep and shepherds as shepherds, with little or no overlap. Yet, God’s ministers are sheep as much as are the sheep themselves. Obviously, wolves would love to devour *shepherds* more than individual members of a flock.

Think! If a wolf could destroy a faithful shepherd, how many *sheep* could he more easily slaughter? Obviously, Christ understood this, and *that* is one reason He warned His disciples to beware of men. Faithful ministers will take note.

I have learned that Jesus Christ knew what He was talking about. I know what it means to be “delivered up to the Councils” and “scourged



in the Church.” It is this painful learning process that has made clear to me *why* the Bible teaches, “Trust no man.”

Ask yourself: “Who teaches the FULL RESTORED truth?—and is this man/organization faithfully carrying out God’s Work?” God will show you where He—and His chosen servant—are working! Even then, never trust your salvation to any man. Your personal relationship with God supersedes all human loyalties.

The goal of each Christian for the rest of the age is to leave behind all confusion and false doctrine, and to locate and return to the one, unified, organized Church—the Body of Christ—being led by Christ and doing His *true* Work.

### Benefit of the Doubt?

Anyone who has been betrayed several times automatically becomes mistrustful. The natural reaction is to acquire suspicion toward virtually everyone and everything. After the leaders of the WCG betrayed the Church, suspicion and distrust exploded to the fore. Additional, further betrayal among God’s people, by the leaders of the splinters, has greatly increased general suspicion and mistrust in this age. This tendency has led people to paint *all* ministers with the same brush. I *partly* understand this. However, be very careful if you do this, because you could also be painting yourself into a corner. You could block yourself from hearing the words of the faithful minister of Christ writing you now!

Let me explain. For example, people often tell me that they are suspicious that *I* will betray them, simply because *other* ministers did. When I protest and tell them, “But *I* never betrayed you,” they usually remain unconvinced.

Let’s turn the coin over! Here is how I respond to these people. When I tell them (I do all this rhetorically, for effect) that I do not trust THEM, they protest. Then I tell them that I do not care, because I have seen tens of thousands of *other* brethren (not referring to ministers now!) sell out and betray the truth. When they respond, “But *I* did not do this,” I ask if they want me to at least give them the *reasonable* benefit of the doubt that they will not give me. By this time, they usually get the point. I hope that you do, too.

It is now very hard to receive the benefit of the doubt from most brethren. While a certain amount of “healthy” mistrust is always in order, and even more so in this age, there is a limit as to how far this can go.

If you cannot trust the ever-present, all-powerful, living Jesus Christ to lead His faithful ministry—which means the Church that He promised to build *and protect*—you are doomed to wander outside the Body of Christ, waiting to inherit all the prophecies described for those who will not return to God’s Church!

You have sentenced yourself to be a “branch” cut off from the “Vine” (John 15:6), and continuously subject to the confusing influence of the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) until you have completely lost God’s Spirit (I Thes. 5:19).

## THE AUTHOR OF ATTACKS

A remarkable account is found in John 8:30. It records that “many *believed* on Him [Jesus].” Jesus went on to explain that the only way for these to remain His disciples was to “continue in My word” (vs. 31). The next statement is familiar to all: “And you shall know the *truth*, and the *truth* shall make you *free*” (vs. 32). (Sadly, so many have forgotten this today.)

What makes this account so incredible is that almost immediately after Christ’s instruction, these same “believers” became so offended they sought to KILL CHRIST. Notice verse 37, remembering the context concerns those who “believed on Him.” So then, these people were actually very different from what they *seemed* to be. Christ indicted them, stating, “You are of your father the devil” (vs. 44), and explaining that Satan, like these people, was a murderous liar. Yet, and this is important to see, it does not indicate their “believing on Him” was fake or feigned. Possibly, in their own minds, their belief felt genuine.

Bear in mind that these would-be disciples were Jews, meaning that they were keeping the Sabbath and holy days, tithing, eating only clean meats, and doing other things we would agree with. In addition, they certainly *appeared* to be sincere—and already possessed many truths. While they apparently *did* believe in Christ, this did not prevent Him from identifying them as MURDEROUS LIARS!

Very carefully reflect on the lesson of this account! Have you seen similar conduct in people whom you thought were standing up for prin-

ciple—who *appeared* to believe the truth—who *seemed* to have their heart in the Work?

A very famous statement emerged from World War II that teaches a powerful truth related to this account. Ironically, it was uttered by one of history's greatest liars, Adolf Hitler, who believed that people question little lies, but no one questions BIG LIES. Notice what he wrote in *Mein Kampf*:

“All this was inspired by the principle—which is quite true in itself—that in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods.”

How true! If I were determined to slander someone, I would tell a lie so large that people would say, “It must be true.” I would feel that the worse I could make it, the more likely people would believe that I could not have invented it. The most outrageous stories I have heard about people often *had not one shred of truth* to them—and this certainly includes me—there was literally *no basis in fact for them whatsoever!* (At this point, I could write an inset with volumes of proof just from my own life.)

The devil has long sought to destroy the peace and unity of God's Headquarters. He knows that *this* is where he can do the most damage with “big lies.” All he has to do is find people there who are willing to invent and spread them. With the ever-worsening character breakdown in this age, this presents him no problem. If Satan can deceive the whole world for 6,000 years (Rev. 12:9), then deceiving a few people here or there into making false accusations is easy. And, as explained, most of the deceived even believe their own stories. Large numbers are only too willing to swallow and believe them, if only because it is easy. It requires neither work nor discernment.

Consider what Mr. Armstrong said:

“Today, as in the time of the first apostles, MANY DECEIVERS are gone out into the world. They will ACCUSE God's Church and His Work. It is Satan the devil who is the accuser of the true brethren (Rev. 12:10).

“Much of the New Testament is WARNING God's people of these snares of Satan to hinder—to attempt to DESTROY the very Work of

God—the very Work which is THE REASON God has called you NOW—before He undertakes to SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD!”

“*Why Did God Put You in His Church?*”, GN, May 1974

Do you still believe the simplicity of statements like this? Does it seem “old-fashioned”—“out of step with reality”? Many splinter people seem to have so easily and quickly forgotten the hidden work of this powerful fallen being, seemingly feeling themselves immune to his deception. Since Satan already holds the world captive, he can focus most of his attention on God’s people—and most particularly on those who will not compromise.

### **The Devil as Victim**

We live in an age when almost everyone is a *victim*. Only rarely do people now acknowledge or admit that they are wrong or did evil. Seemingly, people can steal, lie, cheat, rebel, or even kill, and still find a way to declare themselves *victims*. I have watched people do terribly wrong things, conduct that creates havoc for their victims, yet, in the end, always see *themselves* as victimized by *someone else’s* actions. Sometimes, their “logic” is almost genius.

The devil is no different. He sees himself as God’s greatest victim, not believing that he has done anything wrong, but rather that God has given him the “short end of the stick.” When Satan is to be bound for 1,000 years, he will probably go “kicking and screaming” to the bottomless pit (where he will be chained), proclaiming his own innocence and his “inside knowledge” of *God’s* “guilt.”

One way to know through whom the devil is working is to look at people who publicly or privately slander, accuse, attack and perpetrate evil, and cover their own actions with a blizzard of self-justifying big lies. Usually, and always to the simple, these people *can* fairly easily present their case as victims standing up for righteous causes. The world is filled with such people.

### **“Taken Captive to Do His Will”**

II Timothy 2:24-26 contains important instruction to ministers and others who may be trying to help people acknowledge and repent of sin. The context describes how God’s servants should be gentle, patient, meek, etc., as they attempt to help brethren recognize the truth about their actions. Read these verses very carefully!

Verse 26 refers to those who are caught up in sins that they do not see or will not acknowledge: “And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are TAKEN CAPTIVE by him *at* [should read “TO DO”] HIS WILL.” The King James Bible is not completely correct in its translation of the passage. Satan cannot capture people “at” his will, but rather “*to do*” it.

This is a stunning scripture for those who will receive it. It makes clear that people *can* literally be captured by the devil and sent as his pawns on missions “to do his will.” Of course, most who are caught up in this way would be totally oblivious to this. Have you realized that *Satan puts his servants to work?*—that he does not allow them to be idle and unproductive?

Through the years, I have watched the devil capture people—and it has always been terrible to witness. And I have not known one person that he has *captured* who recognized what had happened!

When understood, this verse reveals that *every one* of God’s people is a candidate for such kidnapping—but it can only happen to the unvigilant and unsuspecting!

There is another key aspect of *how* the capture works. Mr. Armstrong often noted that the Church’s worst accusers came from within and were people who had secret sins in their lives. Sometimes such attackers had *multiple* sins they were hiding. They were already in a deeply wrong spirit, and accusing others became easier. Many times, Mr. Armstrong observed that they were not tithing, were secretly breaking the Sabbath or practicing other major sins. Neglecting prayer, Bible study, and fasting always accompanied the drifting from God. Satan will seek to capture you by *first* capturing your personal behavior through sin.

Recognize this!

This sobering reality has been a spiritual fact of life in God’s Church. In short, the devil captures people through disobedience to God’s Law and then sends them rushing into his service to confuse, attack, divide, slander, cast doubt—and worse—in *doing his will*. Without repentance, the ability to recover (vs. 26) from such capture is impossible!

Do not allow this to be lost on you.

### **You Cannot Sue a Brother**

Another important aspect of Satan’s involvement in the persecution of the Church and Work of God must be addressed at this juncture. It is

directly related to how he uses some of those whom he has captured. Let's learn.

The Bible is most plain about whether true Christians can sue other true Christians. Through use of a question, Paul, in I Corinthians 6, makes clear that this is strictly forbidden by God. Study the account, noting that verses 1 and 2 carry the following two questions: "DARE any of you [or, "How DARE you?"], having a matter against another, *go to law* before the unjust and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

Verse 6 explains that when those who are apparently Christian "brothers" do this, they create a spectacle before *unbelievers* who either preside in court or hear of it later. Verses 7-8 explain, "Now therefore there is utterly *a fault* among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? No, *you do wrong*, and defraud, and that your brethren."

No true Christian can *ever* sue another Christian. Believe me, I have watched the deceitful machinations of those who profess to be Christians who decided to sue someone in a splinter. These people twist, pervert, contort and distort their frame of mind until they convince themselves that the person whom they are suing is really *not* a brother—and then they *attack!* Any who do this have, themselves, been captured by the devil and have probably already ceased to be brothers in Christ.

If one becomes an evildoer—a CRIMINAL—then, of course, he is no longer a Christian. This verse would not apply if, among other circumstances, the authorities have successfully brought *criminal* charges.

Obviously, there *are* people who cease to be Christian and do sue others. The question arises, can one defend himself? Christ (Matt. 5:40) *and* Paul (I Cor. 6:7) said you should allow yourself to suffer the suit (you have no choice) and be defrauded if it is over *personal* matters against you or your character. Of course, this does *not* mean that you cannot defend yourself in court and seek to overturn the attack. But if you lose, yield to the court's decision and cast yourself on God's mercy. There is simply no other way for a Christian to view this passage.

If one is sued or put on trial over *matters of truth* or the *name of Jesus Christ*, then Paul's long trial in Acts becomes an example. (Governments, worldly organizations, and false religious or apostate leaders, who attack a true minister or Christian, or the Church, are clearly *not* brothers in Christ. They are God's *enemies*, plain and simple.) Paul vigorously responded to their accusations. One does not "roll over"

without defending himself. Be ready to “fight to the death” over matters of truth if you are ever put in such a position.

This is exactly what Mr. Armstrong did in 1979! He certainly did not roll over when the State of California (inspired by the six dissidents) set out to destroy the Church through false charges and the wrong application of men’s law.

We could some day suffer similar attack by evil people in high places under Satan’s sway (Eph. 6:12). Nevertheless, the court renders its opinion and Christians either yield to men or, when necessary, “Obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

### **Special Persecution—With a Promise**

The Philadelphia (Rev. 3:9) and Smyrna (2:8-11) Church eras were foretold to contend with an evil fraternity described as “the synagogue of Satan.” Notice that Christ offers no criticism of either of these eras. Have you wondered why? The answer is that neither had *doctrinal* problems—and as a result, Christ did not *need* to correct them. Now ask: Is it mere coincidence that both suffered the ferocious attacks and lies (3:9) of this “synagogue”?

The devil hates God’s truth because he is a *liar* (John 8:44). Is it any wonder that his agents lie most about those who are holding to the full *restored* truth?

Grasp this absolutely crucial point! The WCG apostates were not the only members of the synagogue of Satan. Other well-known figures are also part of this prophesied spiritual fraternity of liars afflicting Philadelphia. These assaults will continue until the moment those of this era are taken to safety, with Satan’s army in hot pursuit (Rev. 12:14-17). This understanding is vital for all who are determined to return to and remain Philadelphian. My sermon “The Synagogue of Satan Identified—and Marked!” will shock you. Now or soon, you should hear it.

While many *say* that they are holding fast, they cannot endure the persecution—the “heat in the kitchen”—and either have given up or will in time. This should be no surprise, because God prophesied it. That it is happening around us should actually be *encouraging*—it means the next phase of God’s plan is closer!

### **Place of Safety Promised**

All previous eras of God’s Church suffered infinitely worse things (prison, torture, death, etc.) than Philadelphians must experience.



Revelation 12:10-12 pictures God's servants—actually His Church—over a 6,000-year period. (See Hebrews 11:32-38.) It is clear that Philadelphians' protection is unique in all history. God promises those of brotherly love, who are full of good works, doctrinal integrity, who carefully watch world news with the right things in mind, and who have conviction about His Work, a special deliverance from the greatest suffering the world will ever know, and He offers them protection that He does not offer others of *any* previous era in the same way. This is because Philadelphians' suffering *precedes* the Great Tribulation. The Bible makes plain that, through this “pre-tribulation,” they are put to an extraordinary test, partly coming from the “synagogue of Satan.” Of course, the book of Acts records that every true servant of God enters the kingdom of God only “through much tribulation” (14:22).

When Jesus said, in Matthew 24, “You shall be *hated* of all nations for My Name's sake,” He knew that much worse times were coming. No doubt, the devil's hatred, through *his agents*, will drive *this* worsening hatred.

But I have repeatedly seen God perform powerful miracles when I was at my own “Red Sea.” I have come to now *expect* Him to perform miracles on our behalf when He needs to—and when *we* need Him to! He always does and always will until, in the end, as Mr. Armstrong reminded the Church, “We win.”

But what about those on the other side of this knowledge?



## THOSE WHO “FIGHT GOD”

Sometimes the Bible relates stories in which the point is so clear—so obvious—that there is virtually no way to miss it. The account of Gamaliel’s warning, in Acts 5:29-42, to those who had seized and imprisoned the apostles, is one such example. Strangely, many *are* missing its point!

In the account, Peter makes the well-known statement, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (vs. 29). This sets the stage for Gamaliel’s caution (vs. 34) to the council sitting in judgment of the apostles. This man was a renowned “teacher of the law” held “in respect by all the people” (NKJV). He warned the crowd to be careful of the action that they chose. In other words, if the council tortured, imprisoned or killed the apostles, they had done either of two things—one bad, the other worse: They would have either wasted their time addressing people who would eventually “come to nothing,” anyway (vs. 38), because God was not with the accused—or “But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; lest haply [perhaps] you be found even to *fight against God*” (vs. 39).

Yes, it is possible to FIGHT GOD! Apparently, though all seemed to agree with Gamaliel (vs. 40), the account records that they still beat and threatened the apostles before dispersing.

This story represents a huge lesson and WARNING to people who accuse those who serve God: “Look out—you may be fighting GOD, not men!” I do not fear people who are foolish enough to do this—and *you* should not fear them either. However, I do certainly fear FOR them.

Having gone too far down the road of almost non-stop false accusations and persecution to let these things upset me, I do not fear ANY who come against me or God's Church. However, I believe that one reason God says to pray for our enemies is that *they* are in deep trouble *with Him*. They need our prayers because they *are* fighting God. And nothing else is remotely close to the serious implications of this for any found doing it.

There is a side note to the story in Acts 5 that should greatly encourage brethren under severe attack. But we should ask: What could possibly be *encouraging* about receiving intense persecution? Just this. If a pattern of attacks continues, from inside or outside the Church, this becomes its own statement (remember Mr. Armstrong's earlier quote) about who the adversary of the truth *hates the most!* Carefully think this through!

Attacks often come from those claiming to be the ones most perfectly "defending the truth." Some see themselves as a sword in God's hand to punish evildoers—and to warn people to stay away from those *they* deem to be false, heretical or dangerous. (Of course, others establish websites for the opposite purpose of combating all forms of "Armstrongism.")

This often happens because some people are not sufficiently strong in the truth themselves—they are *unsound, unlearned, untrained or unskilled* in the Word of God, so they speak out-of-season with no idea what they are talking about. I have often noticed that it is these misguided "defenders of the faith" who "invent evil things"—things that never happened. I have also noticed that it is nearly impossible to convince them that they could be wrong about what they believe they saw. These are almost invariably those who joined one of the two large organizations that left the WCG very early. These are usually those most deeply entrenched in the belief that they most loyally represent and *defend the truth!*

Consider this remarkable statement from Mr. Armstrong's 1982 sermon "Why the Church?"—perhaps the single clearest, most comprehensive sermon I ever heard him give. He discusses those who seem to understand true doctrines in a *physical* way, but actually understand almost *nothing* that is spiritual in nature. They do not comprehend the real meaning or intent of the truth and are not led of the Holy Spirit. (Italics obviously mine.)

Notice:

"We are not in the Church unless the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us (II Cor. 6:16). Just being in the Church and saying you are a member and *I*

*often wonder how many that say they are members, and we look on as members of the Church, really are?...*

“The Holy Spirit of God must be opening your mind to God’s way of life and you must be living that way of life. You must be following where the Holy Spirit of God is leading you. (Rom. 8:7) Because the carnal mind, and we were all carnal to begin with, and some of us I’m afraid still are, unless we really have received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of *a changed mind, a sound mind, a different kind of mind that can comprehend spiritual knowledge*. And I have found so many in the Church that have been members for a long time and they *don’t comprehend spiritual knowledge. They get doctrine. They’re straight on doctrine but they don’t understand it...*

“Brethren, I worry sometimes about the Church and I have to remember we don’t get a full measure of the spirit of God all at once... If any man have not the spirit of God he is none of His. I don’t care how long he has been a member of the Church. I think most of us do have God’s Spirit but I know there have been those among us who rose up to be evangelist rank in the ministry that did not have the Holy Spirit. And sometimes it would be easy for me to lose faith when I think of those things. *I tell you everyone of us needs to examine himself...*”

Of course, most brethren in the WCG apparently never did examine themselves or only did so superficially. As previously mentioned, we now know that Mr. Armstrong was *correct* when he said that most never truly “got it.” But the only ones who never “got it” are not just the over 110,000 who gave up or stayed in the WCG. It is a grave error to assume that, because people went with a splinter, they have done all that was required of them. Some of these people are now fighting God, and have been captured by Satan. Their fruits prove it! (“*ANOINT YOUR EYES*” covers in exhaustive detail the special, biblically-prescribed examination and recovery process that Christ expects every one of His people to undergo if he or she is to escape what lies ahead.)

### **God Owns Vengeance!**

When under attack, people usually take matters into their own hands. This invariably includes lashing back at accusers, as though the golden rule is “Do unto others as bad or worse than they have done unto you.” While this is a natural human response, it is not what *God* desires—and I did not always understand this. I thank my enemies for forcing me to learn what I teach you now.

When under persecution Paul's attitude regarding his attacker was "the Lord reward him according to his works." He was speaking regarding Alexander the coppersmith, and we will examine this in a little more detail later. Paul also was inspired to repeat, "Vengeance is Mine; I WILL REPAY, says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19), citing from Deuteronomy 32:35, which reads, "To Me *belongs* vengeance, and recompense [repayment]."

Carefully examine these most crucial passages. They give VITAL INSTRUCTION for all who wish to handle attacks and false accusations *God's way!* God plainly declares that vengeance and repayment are His "belongings"—that they are "His" (God says, "Mine"). Put another way, vengeance is one of God's *personal possessions*—something we cannot take from Him without being guilty of *stealing*. Would you take a car, a house, money, or anything else—*knowing* it was not yours? Of course not, because, if one takes something belonging to another, he is a thief—plain and simple!

This puts vengeance into an entirely different context from the way human nature views it. If God declares that taking tithes and offerings, which belong to Him, is "robbing God" (Mal. 3:8-10), then so is taking *anything else* that belongs to Him. Appropriating to yourself the repayment of wrongs and injustices—exacting vengeance on your own authority—is just that serious to God.

If anyone is to "deal" with another, because of suffering wrongs, it had better be GOD. Besides the fact that He does not *need* us to address accusers, it is actually *stealing* from Him if His people try. This cannot be stressed strongly enough. Further, any who steal from God might find Him "repaying" *them* instead of their attackers or accusers!

Have you considered this?

Also consider! When God carries out vengeance, He knows exactly *how much* to mete out. *Do you?* Be honest—admit that no human being is qualified to determine this. All human beings would give either too much or too little repayment. Their feeling would be colored. Remember, Paul wrote, "The Lord reward him *according to his works.*" God knows *how* and *when* to do this—and *how much*—and you and I cannot.

Christ's followers must never forget this! Realize that the future may test your memory.

### **"Discerning Good and Evil"**

The Bible reveals that God's Church in every age has *false brethren*. Paul used this term in II Corinthians 11:26, when describing the many

“perils” with them that beset his ministry. False brethren *look like* true brethren, but are not. Just as tares *look like* wheat, so false brethren *look like* those who have the Holy Spirit to the undiscerning. Remember also that tares generally cannot be uprooted, because the wheat do not see the difference, and might leave with them (Matt. 13:24-30).

Notice that while “the servants of the householder” in that parable (the ministry) *can* discern the wheat from the tares, the wheat *cannot*! The Bible is clear on this. Take time to re-familiarize yourself with this parable. However, ministers can sometimes also be fooled—I certainly have been at times. Some of the local church elders who came with Restored fooled us. Mr. Armstrong was fooled, and said so, as the last quote describes regarding certain evangelists who turned out to be unconverted.

Let’s face it. Most of us once attended with over 150,000 people that we supposed were brethren, and we only *later* were able to realize that about 75% (at least three-quarters!) were probably never converted. Sadly, the apostasy “survival” statistics reveal numbers of this magnitude. Of the 30,000 to 35,000 or so who went to one of the splinters, the vast majority continued as Laodiceans—because this is the *dominant* condition at the end. Few who still believe in Church eras doubt that we are now in the seventh era. Only a relative few people (ministers included) were what they appeared to be when all of God’s people were together in the WCG. This is the *simple math* of our time!

Hebrews 5:14 speaks of those who are “of full age” and on “strong meat.” Paul explains these reached this point because “by reason of *use* [they] have [had] their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Many apparently never really learned to do this. *Can you?* Do not be too quick to answer “yes.”

How often did Mr. Armstrong warn the Church about taking of the tree of the knowledge of *good* and *evil*? Learn to discern whether you are in the presence of good mixed with evil—this includes doctrine *and* conduct. Only those actively *using* God’s Word (vs. 13) can hope to achieve this in their conversion.

Be honest with yourself! Admit that ministers, false doctrines and people have fooled you, and probably many times! The question becomes what will you now do about it?

People who are unlearned or inexperienced in God’s Way can fall into a pattern of arguing about words, ignoring Paul’s instruction in I Timothy 6:4 not to “dote about questions and strifes of words.” Mr. Armstrong’s last statement explains *why* some who generally “have the doctrines,” as he put it, do not comprehend them.

Understand! Many “strive about [doctrines]” because they do not grasp the Bible’s *intent*. This becomes one more reason to be careful of believing charges made by those you do not know, involved in events you did not witness, that involved people you have never met—and that took place far away.

I have worked with over 11,000 people throughout my over 42 years in the ministry, and I never cease to be amazed at human behavior. I am *still* learning more about people almost daily, and I am *still* learning to discern good and evil in them. Be willing to admit the same things of yourself. It is a key to surviving this age!



# THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE

**W**hen a Christian is persecuted—under attack—often suddenly, a host of factors come to bear. The experience itself can be very confusing, as can be the circumstances surrounding it. In addition, emotional and mental pain, and shock, from the encounter can be intense. To make matters worse, conflicting advice can be offered, and the ill-prepared person can be left feeling he has no idea what to do.

What is the correct response—the one *God* expects?

## **Watching God at Work**

Since the inception of The Restored Church of God, we have seen God resolve a great many difficult problems for us. In several instances, we had not an inkling or clue of oncoming challenges, events or attacks until they arrived.

Here is an analogy to consider: Suppose God knows of a potentially fatal crash that could involve you and a drunk driver still miles down the road. You drive on lost in your thoughts, oblivious to the danger ahead. Thankfully, of course, God is not unaware, and He and His angels are looking ahead and watching over you. While you would recognize miraculous deliverance on some occasions, many other times you would never be able to know that God delivered you. This is because the drunk may shoot past *in his own lane*, after weaving badly just moments before.

Your life was both threatened and spared, all without your knowledge!

This analogy represents how God watches out for His people—again and again—and it is part of what Paul meant in Romans 8:36. Notice: “For your sake we are killed *all the day long*; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” The next verse reminds, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

Meditate on this passage, and internalize it for use in the difficult final years that lie ahead for every one of God’s people. When, in the Christian war, you are surrounded by “live fire” (as we have often been), you pray constantly for deliverance. I hope many brethren will also pray for *us*.

Here is why!

### What Should You Do?

The worst is yet to come in this age. Notice this vital instruction to apply on behalf of faithful ministers: “Brethren, *pray* for us, that the word of the Lord may *have free course* [speed on], and be glorified... and that we may be delivered from UNREASONABLE and WICKED men: for all men have not faith” (II Thes. 3:1-2).

Notice the words “unreasonable” and “wicked.” Understanding what God intends to convey in the meaning is fascinating. The Greek root for “wicked” is *poneros*, which can also be translated “degenerate,” “malicious,” “vicious,” “wicked,” “devilish” or “diseased.” Obviously, God chose a very, very strong word to describe certain people that the ministry must occasionally deal with. Anyone fitting this description truly *is* spiritually diseased.

“Unreasonable” is also interesting and it comes from the Greek word *atopos*, meaning “out of place, improper, absurd, injurious or unreasonable.” People in this condition cannot be helped or reasoned with in a logical way. God calls them “unreasonable”—and wise people will recognize and never forget this!

Paul spoke more than once about how he was being “hindered” in his service to God’s people. You are told to *pray* for ministers—in context, it emphasizes particularly those who lead the Church and the Work—who are being harassed, attacked, accused and impeded by what are understood to be unreasonable, absurd, malicious, spiritually-diseased people. This is vital because, if you do, God’s Word and Work can then “speed on.”

This is basic instruction for regular use in the prayer of every true Christian.

**“Turn the Other Cheek” and “Love Your Enemies”**

All recognize these phrases from Matthew 5:38-45. While everyone knows them, few actually *apply* them, and this creates a big problem throughout the splinters! Recognize that these instructions are direct COMMANDS from Christ that are basic and impossible to misunderstand. When people “smite” you (vs. 39), you are instructed to “turn the other cheek”! The true people of God *never* exact an “eye for an eye” (we will address the subject of vengeance later).

Now read verses 44-45: “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; THAT YOU MAY BE THE CHILDREN OF YOUR FATHER...in heaven.*”

People are not born with the natural tendency to react as Jesus instructed. This takes a lifetime to learn, and I have not always done it correctly. Events of recent years, particularly those after the apostasy, have taught me much about how and why these principles must be practiced. This means they must be *worked at*. I have learned that knowing them and actually *doing* them are vastly different things. It is simply against nature to see your enemy hunger and to feed him—but that is what God’s Word says to do in Romans 12! You cannot circumvent what God requires and then expect Him to act on your behalf.

While God says to pray for ministers under attack, He also says to pray for *your* accusers and persecutors. We will later see more clearly that they are in *big* trouble with Him. He intends to deal with them and wants to see how important it is to His people to try to secure mercy for them.

Consider very carefully! Those who will intervene in prayer on behalf of those whom God is about to punish (for attacking the very people now praying for them) are the essence of what it means to be *His children*. Matthew 5:45 is at the core of Christianity and it reveals how *God* defines who are His children. Of course, this approach is the antithesis of human nature, and most people find it impossible to learn and practice.

When God was about to destroy Israel for murmuring against both Himself and Moses, it was *Moses’ own prayers* that stopped God’s decision to wipe out the whole nation. God had planned to start over with the very man who was asking Him *not to do this!* This is the foundation of what it means to be a real Christian—to “turn the other cheek” and to “love your enemies.” I have had to learn this lesson in

a profound and painful way—and I intend to never stop teaching it to all who will listen!

What has been shown here also explains *why* only a relatively small group, with “little strength,” will be able to return to and remain Philadelphian to the end. They are not only able to hold fast, in doctrine, tradition and conduct, but can also love and pray for the very people who slander them. After all, this is one of the requirements of being among the people of brotherly love, the very meaning of Philadelphia.

You must remember to copy in this way the conduct and teachings of Jesus Christ, knowing that the rest of the age will constantly grow more turbulent!

This practice carries its own wonderful reward!

### God Is Our Defense

When you sing from the hymnal, “Righteous Judge, from foes defend me, who *deceitful charges* lay” (Psalm 43 in the purple hymnal), do you think about these words? On God’s authority, I tell you that His true servants must be ready for far more in the future than any could now dream. I have already been stunned—repeatedly—at the inventions of some I knew for many years. But I also had to come to realize that they probably have brought themselves to believe their own charges.

One man, involved in a very complicated purpose, admitted to me in a letter that he had lied to me so that I would continue to “carry out” a plan that he accused me of having. When I did not fall into the trap that he and others had laid for me, it accidentally sprang on himself and those with him. He left and attacked me with a vengeance, professing to still “love” us.

Usually, people who explode in rage affect at least a few with their false charges. We will soon examine the scriptural reason *why*. We know that other major attacks will be planned and executed against us, both from within and outside. Some (perhaps most for a while longer) will come from so-called “churches of God.” However, we press on knowing that we are the sole custodians of the full truth, and where the true Work is continuing under God’s government—and also knowing that we wear a bull’s eye to those who hate it.

Every member of God’s Church once believed that assaults against it would primarily come from the secular world, inspired by the governments of men. Certain events indicate that some of the most violent assaults on the Body of Christ can occur within the “family” of orga-

nizations and groups with whom we once shared beliefs. I have even come to expect that elders who leave us (and this has occurred a number of times) will probably seek to take a following after themselves, join our enemies, and thus “make merchandise” of the brethren. We must not be deceived when they do this. The true Church has always had false ministers leave, and then move against it. This should not be expected to change. (Section II examines this much more closely.)

If we let God defend us, He will even turn our enemies' swords on themselves. You too must be able to “stand still” and watch the salvation of God!

Take time to read Psalms 41, 43 and 143. Many verses, there and elsewhere, show that God continually protects and delivers His servants from persecuting enemies. These are psalms of David, and it becomes clear that this king had many enemies other than Saul. When under attack, David poured his heart out to God. These psalms, with others, show how he felt and what he prayed about on such occasions. David did ask God to smite his enemies, and, of course, Jesus changed that pattern (Matt. 5:43), but the rest of what David records in his songs to God is wonderful instruction for everyone. Consider just this familiar one: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: *but the LORD delivers him out of them all*” (Psa. 34:19).

Ask God for the FAITH to truly *believe* the many verses containing His promise to protect you!

### **Built on a Rock**

Jesus closed the Sermon on the Mount by contrasting those who build their houses on “rock” to those who build on “sand” (Matt. 7:24-29). In fair weather, both houses look and function the same. Realize that the intent of Christ's parable is to contrast people who hear *and do* His Word with those who merely *hear* them. To ACT on Christ's Words—the Rock—is equivalent to building your house *on* Him—meaning, *on what He says!*

The reason every home's foundation must be completely solid is because fair weather never lasts forever. Rain, floods and wind eventually beat on *every* house. Sand is always washed away, eventually taking the houses built on it.

We could ask: What weather event in nature brings enough rain and wind to “beat” on a house long enough to create a flood? Only a hurricane (sometimes called a typhoon) can do all of these things—*and* bring devastation to the homes and buildings that lie in its path.

In effect, Christ explains that *all* of His servants lie in the path of spiritual “hurricanes.”

The “apostasy-hurricane” that God’s people lived through is probably the worst of all time. Most Worldwide Church of God attendees have already been swept away, having drowned, so to speak, without escaping their “houses.” Like some flood victims, they have permanently disappeared, never to be found again in any way connected to true Christianity.

Doing exactly what *Christ taught* through His apostle and the final Moses (Mal. 4:4) is your “rock.” If you truly believe this, as you did when Mr. Armstrong was alive, then you must be found doing all of the words that constitute this Rock (II Tim. 3:14).

Some others seem to build like those who constructed the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, built half on rock and half on hardpan clay. In recent years, engineers have struggled to save this extraordinary building, after its long, slow, further leaning. While it has taken many centuries to reach this point, it *will* eventually topple if it is not shored up!

This book is not written to people who have built their house *completely* on sand. Such people cannot hear its message. It is for those who *partly* follow the words of Christ, and partly do not. This describes those of the seventh era, who have some or even much truth, but do not covet *all* that Christ teaches. They could yet “anoint their eyes” and “see” (Rev. 3:18). They need not lose God’s Spirit.

If there is *any* sand under your house, carefully—diligently—dig it out and replace it with rock. I tell you on God’s authority that the worst part of the hurricane *STILL LIES AHEAD!* If you doubt this, review prophecy and what is in store for all whose lives reflect the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

### **Heresy Loves Company—and Creates Division**

The New Testament explains *why* God permits heresy to periodically strike His Church. When false teaching is present, it actually fulfills a part of His pre-ordained plan for each Christian. In I Corinthians 11:18, Paul speaks of “divisions” in the Church and sets the stage for a remarkable statement. Notice: “For there *must be* also heresies among you, that they which are *approved* may be made *manifest* [obvious] among you” (vs. 19).

Were you aware that God states that false doctrines—as part of His carefully designed plan—*MUST* strike His Church, in part to see what YOU will do?

Where division exists, so does heresy—and where heresy exists, so does division. One *always* begets the other. Whenever either happens, everyone coming in contact with the wrong ideas is tested to see whether they will “blow” with the “winds of [new] doctrine” (Eph. 4:14-15)—in this age, coming at hurricane force—or successfully resist them.

These are the choices!

Most are familiar with the phrase “misery loves company.” So does heresy. Like cancer and leaven, false doctrine always spreads, both *within* the mind of the one overtaken by it (into other doctrines), and *from* him to others. This then breeds division between those who accept the false teachings and those who will not. This should not be hard to understand. What took place in the Church at the end of the twentieth century was simply that the trial happened on a grand scale.

Whether false teaching overcomes five people out of a group of ten or more than 100,000 out of an organization exceeding 150,000 is irrelevant. This is because the principle and the dynamics with which it develops are still exactly the same. Never forget this!

Understand! Eventually, many of the final era will fall away completely before the time of Satan’s wrath—the Tribulation. God, in His mercy for His people, will use this time of world trial for certain others to reverse the process of departure from truth before it is too late for the one half of Laodiceans who *will* awaken, in Tribulation. He expects you to recognize the patient mercy that He is extending to you through this book.

Do not let people sway you into false ideas about why you should stay where *any* amount of heresy is tolerated. Of course, others of our books to the splinters address this in much more detail, but this much must be clear. This is what those of LAODICEAN THINKING today are doing! While they *do* keep the commandments (Rev. 12:17), they do not hold on to the full truth. Their false doctrines bring disagreement among them, which brings splitting, because people cannot disagree *and* walk together (Amos 3:3). Then, with splits come terrible accusations between groups. However, once people remove themselves from both the heresy and division, and return to *everything* they *should* have PROVEN, they have escaped this process!

### **The True Church Knows Christ’s “Voice”**

The tenth chapter of John describes in detail the relationship between sheep and shepherds—ministers and the brethren under their charge. It

describes wolves, strangers, thieves and robbers threatening the sheep. Christ explains that when this occurs, His sheep “know His voice” and follow Him when “He calls His own sheep *by name*, and leads them out” (vs. 3-5). When the people of God are in danger, Christ calls them *by name* and leads them “out” to *safety*! This call is specific—individual—personal. But brethren must be willing to follow when they hear it.

This is the John 10 message!

In Revelation 3:20, Christ promises to knock on the door of *every* person and call him or her to “be zealous and repent” (vs. 19). Like John 10:3, this is a promise that He cannot break (vs. 35). He must call (and He *has* been calling) His sheep to where He has placed His name. For 2,000 years of Church history, the living Jesus Christ has always done this. In probably the greatest time of threat to His flock in history, He would certainly not abandon this promise, failing to call His people to protection. Remember, He has made a promise that He would “*never* leave or forsake the Church.” You are literally reading now of its fulfillment as it applies to you.

In John 10, the Greek word for “voice” is fascinating. It is *phone* (fo-NAY’), and our English word *telephone* derives from it. Literally, Christ’s *voice* is His *phone*. Like most today, Christ has a *phone* and He actively uses it. But, just as some do not answer their phone when it rings or answer a knock at their door, many will not answer Christ when He calls them from danger. These will lose His Spirit (I Thes. 5:19). As He keeps His promise, will *you* follow His call?

Christ’s responsibility is to make it absolutely clear where His full truth is—where He is at work—with each sheep then deciding what to do when presented with that knowledge! (I simply cannot repeat often enough that it is absolutely vital that you carefully read one of our most important books to the splinters “*Anoint Your Eyes*” – *Christ’s Warning to His People* to learn far more about this process, and how it works in this age.)

### Three Separate Groups

From here on—for the rest of the age!—God’s Church will interact with *three* distinct groups of people. The voices of the Father and Christ work similarly with each category. In Mr. Armstrong’s time, they spoke to only two groups—but a third unique group of people exists today.

Mr. Armstrong explained that there are only *two* commissions. The **FIRST** is to preach the gospel to all nations (including the special



warning to the nations of modern Israel). We are all familiar with *how* God calls each person who is ultimately converted. The SECOND commission has always been described as Christ's command to the soon-to-be-apostle Peter to "feed the flock" (John 21:15-17). Of course, many tools were created within the WCG for these two purposes. These commissions were always separate and distinct, and Headquarters (Pasadena) directed both. Those whom God was calling heard Christ's voice from the WCG, when it was still on track, and made their decision to follow it.

Today, a THIRD, distinct, separate obligation exists for the Church Christ directs. The seventh era was scattered into many organizations. The previous section explained how Christ uses His voice to show them *where* He is working. No minister with the heart of a true shepherd would abandon the confused, wounded, betrayed, war-torn brethren of the final era. Therefore, an ongoing obligation exists for His Church today to help them know where the *full* truth is taught and the *true* Work of God is being done. I pastored for far too long to ignore or neglect the needs of these people. That would be dereliction of duty—thus, we have created *all* the necessary tools for people to determine where God is working. (This is explained in the sermon "Watchman to Israel—Messenger to Laodicea!")

### Not for Everyone

However, The Restored Church of God is not for everyone. We exist for those who believe and understand that God has *one* GOVERNMENT ruling His *undivided* Church. Those who want to criticize, evaluate, accuse, "have a say in how things should be run" or to withhold God's tithes until things go "more to their liking" will think themselves to be "happier elsewhere." Those who do this willingly cut themselves off from Christ, and become responsible for sealing their own fate. While God's way is never a dictatorship, neither is it confusion. (After reading the first four centerpiece splinter books, very carefully read our book *Why The Restored Church of God? – Should You Join?*, paying close attention to Section II. By now you probably realize that it is the final element in the *Splinter Explanation Packet*, and that it covers all of the reasons why one would or would not make the decision to come with us.)

Holding fast is not for the faint of heart. Neither is enduring intense persecution and unjust attacks that strike with the suddenness of an ambush. People joining The Restored Church of God must be strong in Christ, knowing we will suffer attacks almost beyond belief. No one

considering us should doubt this! It is easy to love those who love you (Matt. 5:46-47), but extremely difficult to be in an organization that will not “fight back.”

This is The Restored Church of God!

Tremendous adversity lies ahead for the whole world. Recall Solomon’s admonishment, “If you faint in the day of adversity, *your strength is small*” (Prov. 24:10). Now remember again that Philadelphia’s tribulation is *now* (Acts 14:22). How many would not much prefer *this* “tribulation” to the GREAT tribulation?

Ask yourself: Do you?

# PERSECUTION IS A TEACHER

There is another vital reason God permits His servants to endure continuing, periodic persecution. Understanding it will actually make you grateful for these trials. In fact, persecution plays an extraordinary role—that of *teacher*—in a host of different areas within the Christian’s growth and experience. Once you see how this works, you can add your own additional points of learning.

Let’s understand.

## Learning Humility

The first principle to recognize is that PERSECUTION IS HUMBLING! It takes “the wind out of our sails,” and drives us toward a greater reliance on God. When God’s people are unjustly persecuted, they naturally—and necessarily—cry out to Him for help and deliverance. Feelings of *invulnerability* and *false confidence* instantly vanish when one is under vicious attack. Humanly, we feel powerless—because we *are* basically powerless to do anything about it!

Solomon was inspired to record, “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of ADVERSITY *consider*: God also has set the one over against the other, *to the end that man should find nothing after him*” (Ecc. 7:14). During trials and adversity, people generally reflect more on life, and tend to recognize that it is short—that they had better “consider” its BIG LESSONS, while they still have time. It usually

requires hardship—sometimes severe—to trigger the mind’s learning mechanism into gear!

The psalmist wrote, “It is good for me that I have been *afflicted*; that I might *learn* your statutes” (119:71). One thing learned during intense persecution (“affliction”) is *real humility*. If even Christ “learned by the things that He *suffered*” (He suffered *much* persecution!), then we—and YOU—could hardly be exceptions!

Never allow yourself to forget this tremendously important lesson. Persecution *can* be good for us—though it certainly does not *feel* good (Rom. 8:28)!

Paul made a remarkable statement to the Ephesian elders. After describing “that bonds and afflictions wait for me,” he demonstrated great faith, proclaiming, “But none of these things **MOVE** me, *neither count I my life dear unto myself*, that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). This statement reflects an unusual serenity, considering his circumstances.

Because he was deeply humble, the apostle Paul did not “count his life dear to himself.” The great suffering that filled His ministry humbled him (see the latter part of II Corinthians 11). This is what “bonds and afflictions” do. It is no wonder Paul wrote so much about the need to be thankful in prayers. He recognized that the suffering he endured was *necessary*—absolutely essential—for his Christian growth!

Note that you will learn from “*ANOINT YOUR EYES*” *how* humility has an extraordinary and surprising connection to being able to shed spiritual blindness.

### **Persecution Teaches Boldness and Confidence**

Ironically, many who have been humbled through persecution are accused of *arrogance*! Consider that God said Moses was “*very meek*, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). Yet, Korah (with 250 princes) accused him of “taking too much on himself” (16:3), asserting that Moses’ role should not be elevated over others—and so did Miriam and Aaron. In an ironic twist, these people were really accusing Moses of **ARROGANCE**.

Mr. Armstrong’s detractors also accused *him* of arrogance and presumptuousness all through his ministry. Yet, his tremendous determination to do and teach exactly what God commanded was, in fact, a very **MEEK—HUMBLE—attitude!**

Have you considered that, if the devil could offer his view of God, would he not say that God is vain and arrogant? Of course, he would!—and he would add that God was “too sure of Himself”—“too unyielding”—“too closed-minded.” I am occasionally accused of these things, but so was Mr. Armstrong. Even Christ was thought to speak with too much “authority.” Yet, interestingly, these are the very qualities of Satan, not God.

Do not fall for Satan’s reasoning. See through it!

Neither the original apostles nor Mr. Armstrong were weak, reticent wallflowers! They were bold and tremendously confident leaders, as were other servants of God. Yet, they were humble and meek in God’s eyes. Notice: “In the FEAR OF GOD is *strong confidence*” (Prov. 14:26-27), and “The RIGHTEOUS are *bold* as a lion” (28:1). Of course, these qualities could *seem* to be vanity, arrogance or pride to those who cannot discern the difference.

People striving to follow God precisely demonstrate to Him that they will put their *own* feelings and thoughts aside. *This* is humility, and we just read that a bold strong confidence flows from one’s righteous conduct.

Here is the formula: Persecution is humbling, and forces self-examination, leading to changes in areas of unrighteousness. Then, with increased righteousness comes a greater fear of God, which leads to more strong confidence—and boldness!

Those who want to control me, or get our Headquarters to do *their* will, have accused me or others of our ministers of arrogance. I have learned to be much more concerned with what *God* thinks than with what these *people* think. You must come to feel the same way, or you are destined to remain a men-pleaser. When faced with attacks, most ministers *and* brethren in this age try to please friends and associates more than God.

Does—*will*—the final record of this approach include you?

### **Persecution Forges Determination**

Paul knew that people were capable of hurting him and, of course, some did. Previously referenced, he wrote, “Alexander the copper-smith, *did me much evil*” (II Tim. 4:14). Paul was not attacking Alexander, who may have actually been trying to make the case that Paul was doing this to him, but rather stating that Alexander *had attacked him* in ways that the verse does not recount. The rest of this passage is of prime importance, because it reveals Paul’s approach to

this man. Notice: “The *Lord reward him* according to his works: of whom be you aware also.” Verses 16 and 17 indicate that many people and ministers, previously close to Paul, panicked and abandoned (“forsook”) him, simply because *one* person was spreading evil about him. Astonishing but true!

Even the Bible’s greatest servants like the apostle Paul had to be prepared to stand alone, to sometimes see “*all men forsake*” them, while remembering that “notwithstanding the *Lord stood with me*, and *strengthened me*” (vs. 17).

Mr. Armstrong’s entire life is a towering testimony to the fact that, if we must stand alone, God stands with and strengthens us! This pattern is replicated throughout Scripture. Of the initial local elders with Mr. Armstrong in Oregon, only Basil Wolverton stood with him to the end. (It was Mr. Wolverton’s graphic artwork that appeared throughout WCG publications.) All other early elders forsook Mr. Armstrong, with this eventually leading—actually forcing!—him to start Ambassador College. Of course, if we look at the period before and after Mr. Armstrong died, we must conclude that ultimately almost all elders and ministers either fully or partly forsook his teachings.

I am not naïve enough to think that every elder or minister who comes with us will remain faithful. Will most? Probably, because of the tests they must endure just to arrive here—but I cannot know. However, the experiences of Paul and Mr. Armstrong make a huge statement for all who will hear them.

Recognize the enormous resolve and determination that impelled the lives of God’s greatest servants. These men become extraordinary examples for all who are under severe attack and feeling ALONE. Periodic reading of Hebrews 11 will remind you of the faith required to stand almost alone—or even *completely* alone, as did the prophet Elijah—when facing extremely difficult trials, so severe that they exceed human ability to survive on *physical* strength alone!

The future looks different to those determined to learn the many lessons of persecution.

## GOING FORWARD

**F**uture attacks will come. Nothing can stop them. But no matter who or how many attack The Restored Church of God, and no matter the reason, *this book* is our once-for-all-time answer!

It has been said, “A great deal of intelligence can be invested in *ignorance* when the need for *illusion* is great.” This is so true. There are those who *need* the illusion—and the confusion—that spring from attacks more than they want the light of God’s truth to shine through events. One must *DESIRE* the *actual truth* of matters to be made clear in order to obtain it. I have learned that one must *deeply desire* to exit the world of illusion to be able to accomplish this (Jer. 17:9). Paul said (and I paraphrase), that it is a lack of love for God’s truth that causes Him to send some the “strong delusion” that leaves them in blindness “believing a lie” (II Thes. 2:10-11).

Those who love illusion are promised that they will receive what they sought.

### **The Worst Problem**

Among eight different, negative spiritual conditions, Laodiceans are known for *blindness* (Rev. 3:17). This problem will not permit them to see that they walk *naked* (same verse). Unless someone steps forward to “tell the emperor that he has no clothes on,” most people will “go along to get along,” even copying him, not wanting to *appear* out of step with

everyone else. Of course, most would be too *fearful* to tell an emperor that he is parading around stark naked before thousands of “yes” men and women!

I will not only “tell the emperor,” but will tell you that thousands of brethren in the splinters are naked before God.

If you are walking *blind* and *naked*, in doctrine or conduct, then recognize that *you* must “anoint your eyes with eye salve, *that you may see*” (vs. 18). Ask God to clothe you with His truth and character—the only things that will get His people, including you, through the hard times ahead (Eph. 6:13-17).

Let me stress a final time the importance of reading the book “*Anoint Your Eyes*” – *Christ’s Warning to His People* to understand exactly what Christ meant when He used this phrase—and its application to YOU.

### Take the High Road

Jesus promised to “never leave nor forsake His Church” and that “the gates of Hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it.” These verses have become a powerful article of faith in my life. While “all men have not faith” (II Thes. 3:1-2), the Christian truly *lives by faith* (Hab. 2:4).

Again, the official position of The Restored Church of God is to not answer accusers! Remember, those always demanding the “inside story” are rarely *satisfied* with answers anyway, because their focus is all wrong. They ignore that we teach the full truth of God and are doing His Work with real force and power.

So, we let *God* answer our accusers while we “turn the other cheek.” Although I sometimes would love to write an answer of explanation, I have learned to withhold myself. As explained, and I repeat this for emphasis, when I did this in the past, I could never see what good was accomplished. While I may have felt better personally, it rarely changed anyone’s mind.

Attacks and setbacks are bound to continue in God’s Church. Mr. Armstrong always considered them to be like “the cocking of a gun.” The hammer moved backward right before a bullet shot forward from the barrel. Growth always turned out to lie just ahead. So it is with us. We intend to stay above petty squabbles on the high road of preaching and teaching the full truth and doing God’s all-important Work! Those who do not rise above these endless squabbles—at least in part because it is made worse in the age of hatred, betrayal and offense (Matt. 24:9-10)—are doomed to permanent disappointment!



Why? Because wherever you have imperfect human beings, you have “stories.” Wherever there are stories, there are people who will *tell* them. Wherever there are people who will tell them, there are *always* those who will *listen*. Wherever there are willing ears eager for stories, there are gossips willing to *spread* them. Wherever there are these traf-fickers willing to spread them, there is *discord, division and confusion*—and the devil has won!

Will we lose a few members over our policy? I am sure we will. In fact, we already have—but very, very few and there have been none for years. Will we periodically lose some income over this policy? Probably. Might we occasionally have to adjust in various ways? Almost certainly. But God will always continue to make up the difference and work every-thing out, just as He has always done. In faith, we are determined to let *GOD* answer our accusers—and pray for them when He does!

John 16:2 warns that the time is coming when “whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.” It is clear that people will not be allowed to do this to any but those remaining Laodicean (and the Two Witnesses) in this age. But, as with the time when some would kill the apostles, realize that far worse times *are coming!* Horrendous prophecies tell of what lies ahead for the majority of God’s people who will have convinced themselves “that can’t happen to me.” Tragically, many brethren will *not* awaken in time to realize that not only *can* it happen to them, but it *HAS*—because they did not heed the *WARNINGS* while the “good times” remained. But the good times will soon end!

God’s Word declares that this will occur more suddenly than most are even remotely prepared for.

### **The Best Perspective**

Grasp a final point! For a moment, let’s “call those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). The Bible states that the wicked will someday be “stubble”—“ashes” under the feet of the righteous (Mal. 4:1, 3). Jude calls these “spots”—referring to the wicked who *get into the Church*—as “twice dead, plucked up by the roots” (vs. 12). If you are one of the righteous, should you really fear, or have any respect for, the opinion of those scheduled to become a pile of ashes that you will one day *WALK UPON*? Put bluntly—should you fear ashes?—and how will God view you if you do? After all, this is the ultimate fate of deceitful, murderous slanderers!

Whether or not you are yet a member of The Restored Church of God, I encourage you to periodically review this book. (Of course, we

hope you will anoint your eyes and come with God's Church, and help it complete the Work.) The truths it contains will help to permanently clear the harm of false accusations from your mind!

# SECTION II

# BEWARE OF “GRIEVOUS WOLVES!”

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God is harsh in His choice of descriptive terms for deceivers threatening His Church, using “wolves,” “dogs,” “seducers,” “evil men,” “vipers,” “enemies,” “his (meaning, Satan’s) ministers,” “false prophets,” and others. These are not to be taken lightly. Why are there so many warnings?—and why so varied—and so strong?

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(*Author's Note:* At my request, a team of men wrote this article from material given them at a time when we had just been attacked from within. This is the reason it references my name, as well as certain elements of emails we received, and is not written as though it came from me.)

THE BOOK OF ACTS records an admonition—and sobering warning—that the apostle Paul gave to the elders at Ephesus—one that applies in all eras of God's Church: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall *grievous wolves* enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also OF YOUR OWN SELVES shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to *draw away disciples* after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Grasp what Paul was saying. He could foresee that vicious men, whom he labels "wolves," would eventually "enter in" the congregation with the sole purpose of spiritually tearing God's sheep to pieces—"not sparing" them. Even more remarkably, he *knew* that some of the very men standing before him would turn away from the truth, and also attempt to divide the Church and "draw away" members. How many still believe such basic, impossible to misunderstand warnings?

Paul then reminded the men that he had warned them for a full *three years* about the dangers that lie ahead. He did this because he understood the seductive power of the devil—his ability to ensnare human beings, and then employ them toward his own ends. Paul wrote this to Timothy: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that

they may recover themselves out of the SNARE of the devil, who are *taken captive* by him at [Greek: “to do”] his will” (II Tim. 2:25-26).

Paul may have been more right than he knew, as two men close to him—Clement and Linus—eventually became leaders of the counterfeit Church at Rome!

As has occurred time and again through the ages, wolves have arisen among God’s people—from among the elders, the ordained ministry!—intent on drawing away brethren after themselves.

At a certain juncture, many members of The Restored Church of God received emails from two former local church elders who left the Body of Christ (of course, they do not believe they have, but neither does any other “leader” who departs the Church). Within these letters, the writers air doctrinal differences, hurl accusations at both ministers and fellow brethren, grossly misrepresent recent sermons and other facts, reduce God’s true Church to a “corporate body,” label the Work of God as Satan-inspired “smoke and mirrors,” and declare their intent to join a liberalizing, Pentecostal-flavored splinter that has changed, watered down, suppressed and discarded literally scores of doctrines established in the Philadelphian era.

Using cunning craftiness (Gen. 3:1-5) and hoping to pre-empt any response, one man wrote, “Satan will be the author of even the slightest hint of false accusations or damage control.” This is a vain attempt to place God’s leaders in a catch-22 position: Say nothing, and allow thieves to “steal, kill and destroy”—or protect the flock, and be charged with being led by Satan (remember, Christ Himself was accused of being demon-possessed).

Can you see that such a statement is actually its own attempt at “damage control”? Can you grasp that the writer is seeking to blur the heart of the matter—his desire for a following? And can you “smell” these things of yourself when under fire and no one near you to offer explanation or reassurance (Heb. 5:13-14)? Can you recognize what you are seeing when one of Satan’s agents pukes out a series of false accusations and then warns against false accusations?—when he warns of damage control through use of damage control?

Make no mistake: Christ’s ministers are *duty bound* to protect His flock from “damage” at the hand of thieves and destroyers: “The thief comes not, but for to STEAL, and to KILL, and to DESTROY: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” Christ calls a minister who does not defend the flock “a hireling... [who] sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf

catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep” (John 10:10-13).

Paul wrote a host of warnings to virtually every one of the congregations that received his epistles. Were these warnings “damage control”—or was Paul expressing genuine concern for God’s people, as a shepherd cares for his flock?

In any trial, God’s people must listen for the voice of TRUTH—Christ’s voice (John 10:3-5; 18:37). It is almost comical to watch one of these men attempt to “teach” those he preys upon about “Christ’s voice” when he was never in the Worldwide Church of God, and he never learned the truth until he heard a twisted version of it under an Oklahoma cult leader, at a point ten years after Mr. Armstrong died. This man knows nothing about Christ’s voice. One who in retrospect has apparently never understood Christ’s voice can hardly teach others how to recognize it. One who never learned the doctrines of God under Mr. Armstrong is hardly an authority on how to hold to them.

### Discern the Spirit Behind the Man

We must never forget that God works through flesh—and so does Satan! It is the responsibility of all Christians to distinguish those God is using from others who show themselves to be agents of a different god (II Cor. 4:4). Paul spent all of II Corinthians 11 explaining how to discern one from the other.

We serve a frank—a sometimes painfully blunt—God. We must never be afraid to see men for what they are. Recall the way Scripture describes false leaders:

- “Serpents...a generation of vipers” (Matt. 23:33)
- “Foxes in the desert” (Ezek. 13:4)
- “Men of corrupt minds...reprobate [void of judgment]” (II Tim. 3:8)
- “Dogs” and “evil workers” (Phil. 3:2)
- “Whited sepulchers, which indeed *appear* beautiful outward, but are within *full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness*” (Matt. 23:27)
- “Blind guides” (vs. 24)
- “Hypocrites” (vs. 13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29)

These men claim to be standing for the truth, asserting themselves to be representatives of Jesus Christ. Both have been ordained, and only to the lowest rank in the ministry, for less than a year. Where have been their fruits? What has been their record of suffering for the name of Jesus Christ? How many have they baptized? Has either man given even half a dozen sermons? Remember, Christ’s sheep *know* His voice (John 10:1-

4). He states, “Every one that is of the truth *hears* My voice” (18:37), and that God’s “word is truth” (17:17). Yet these attackers, once among us, but who were clearly now never of us (I John 2:19-21), are joining an organization where heresy, doctrinal confusion and watered-down understanding abounds!

Christ’s sheep “flee” from such men, “for they know not the voice of strangers” (John 10:5) who do not hold fast to the pure word of truth. Read verses 7 through 9. Either the voice of Jesus Christ speaks through the ministry in The Restored Church of God or the men who leave us, and attack—there is no middle ground!

That men *may* have served faithfully (at least partially) for a time does not mitigate what they later do. (Carefully read Ezekiel 18:24-26.) A track record of faithfulness in a marriage only has value if adultery never enters the picture. Previous steadfastness in tithe-paying carries no weight once one begins to steal what belongs to God. Be sure to see the point in regard to how you may have once viewed a man who later went on to permit Satan to turn him.

Consider the fruit of their conduct and beliefs, and then ask yourself:

- Why attack *now*—in this case, within hours of Mrs. Pack’s death? Would true servants of God, who *is* love (I John 4:8), callously seize upon the end of a longtime, faithful servant’s life as an opportunity to stand on a “soapbox” and make their voices heard? Would men of even the most basic decency and outgoing concern for others knowingly strike just as her loved ones are in mourning, and with the whole Church feeling the same? Or would this be done by men led of “*another* spirit”—the “god of this world”? For those with “eyes to see,” the answer is obvious.

- Would righteous men exit in a way that casts doubt, creates confusion and sows division among brethren? Only in the Laodicean age, when every man’s opinion is as good as anyone else’s.

- Would men of God smile, laugh, fellowship and share meals with God’s faithful leaders at our Conference—while at the same time attempting to “work the crowd” there before suddenly leaving without so much as a hint of the issues “troubling” them?

- Would men of truth and sincerity feign commitment to the ministry, discussing relocation plans and specific responsibilities with leaders at Headquarters—and then just days later spew vomit on God’s people?

- And would sound-minded men leave the Body of Christ to join a group that doesn’t even preach the true gospel?

Again, think long and hard about just the *timing* of these and certain other attacks. These men did not even have the decency to give Mr. Pack and his family time to grieve! Could anyone believe that God’s true



servants would use such “slash and burn” tactics? Brethren, even by the world’s standards such things would be considered reprehensible. We can be thankful that Satan left such obvious fingerprints on his work. (By contrast, and on a positive note at the time, messages of sympathy and condolence poured in from members from every corner of the globe, as well as even large numbers in the splinters and elsewhere.)

### **Cut Through Irrational Reasoning!**

Though Satan is brilliant, his mind is twisted and ultimately irrational. Likewise, the thinking of his agents always evidences the same. God, who offers wisdom to those who ask for it (Jms. 1:5), instructs each of us to pick up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” and slice apart shallow, nonsensical arguments and assertions of “evil men and seducers” (II Tim. 3:13).

While we believe most (and maybe all) of God’s people will draw the obvious conclusions and see these men in the correct light, if any element within these letters troubles you, take time to ask yourself:

- How can they agree with the Bible’s (and Mr. Armstrong’s) definition of the Body of Christ for years, and then suddenly have a “spiritual awakening,” reverting to the Protestant counterfeit now popular in the splinters? Why would they then label this long-established doctrine (which Mr. Armstrong plainly taught for decades) as “new understanding”?

- How can a man be so profoundly hypocritical as to receive the news of Mrs. Pack’s death, and then send a letter designed to divide the Church the *very same day*—while purring in this letter that the brethren should “keep the Pack family in [their] prayers”? What could be more outrageous, more reprehensible—more truly disgusting?

- Will these men expect their new “splinter home” to accept their credentials as elders? (They *were* accepted.) Or will they acknowledge they no longer believe their ordinations are valid, and join as lay members? (One now believes that Mr. Pack relinquished his “true” office of Pastor in 2005. Therefore, all ordinations he has performed since then—including this man’s!—would be invalid. Yet, the man has convinced himself that his own credentials—and, no doubt, his cohort’s—somehow *are* valid. Truly, the heart is deceitful above all things [Jer. 17:9]!)

- Since they were accepted as elders there, are they prepared to *perform* interracial marriages in their new “fellowship,” as well as marriages between members and non-members, uphold an open-door

attendance policy, tolerate make-up and inappropriate dress at services, birthday parties, and so much more?

- Since these men believe that a “lack of divine healing within Restored” (a thinly veiled, tasteless reference to Mrs. Pack) is somehow evidence that God is not working here—and yet know that God chose not to heal Mrs. Loma Armstrong or save Richard Armstrong—do they then, according to the same twisted logic, believe Mr. Armstrong’s ministry and the Work God used him to do was invalid as well? (Have these men not read of the many plain healings, demons cast out, divine protection and other miracles that *regularly* occur here?)

- Why were they willing to walk away from a Work that actively teaches “all things,” in every nation and territory, in favor of an organization that teaches *scores* of false doctrines and squanders millions of dollars of tithes stolen from God on an ineffectual television program.

- Ask yourself: Do you recognize the primary goal of those who are themselves deceived individuals: to lead unwitting brethren toward “*another* gospel”—“*another* Jesus”—“*another* spirit”?

In response to being marked and disfellowshipped, one man wrote, “Yes, even Christ Himself was disfellowshipped for sowing division by the self-righteous Pharisees.” Think. Jesus was never part of the Pharisees or their manmade religion. Rather, they rejected Him and His message. It is impossible for Christ to have been disfellowshipped from a group He was never a part of! Take note of this man’s biblical ignorance and deceitful use of Scripture to justify himself. It is obvious he has succumbed to the “spirit of error.”

This man also claims to be upset because he did not receive a phone call begging him to come back (as if it was ever in his mind to reconsider). He dishonestly used Matthew 18:12-14 to conclude that Headquarters should have tried to “win him back.” Yet, he did not bother to engage *us* one-on-one when he attended the Conference! *After* he sent a divisive email to the brethren of his decision to leave, *then* he informed Headquarters of his intentions. He failed to give us a chance to work with him while he was still with us. He “pulled the rip cord,” “bailed out,” attacked us—and then wondered why we did not show “love.” He seems not to realize that his actions were those of a wolf, not a sheep in distress! According to his logic, Christ’s ministry is supposed to ignore the command found in Romans 16:17: “Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them.”

Brethren, what we have here is a wolf feeling bad that we did not try to help him put his sheep’s clothing back on. He felt uncomfortably naked by his own willingness to expose himself.

### Exit Theology

Keep it simple, brethren: The real reason a person leaves the Church—lay member or minister—is that he simply does not love THE FULL TRUTH (II Thes. 2:10). It is no more complicated than that! However, the one who leaves will never admit this, so he must create an “exit theology” in order to (1) soothe his own conscience and (2) portray himself instead as a “grassroots crusader” for God.

If such men cared so much about doctrine, then why did they speak up in *this* manner, with false accusations and scathing attacks? Why did they not “quit themselves like men” and talk to a Headquarters minister face-to-face when they had the opportunity? Why do they lack the courage to openly state they disagree with Mr. Armstrong, both in doctrine and in approach to doing the Work? This fits well with the tactics of their new “Presiding Evangelist.”

Those attending the Conference were informed of certain sensitive matters with the *clear* understanding that this was to be held in confidentiality. No one objected to this. However, these men did not keep their word. (Of course, since no one would expect this from the devil, would his human agents be any different?)

For example, from 1978 until Mr. Armstrong’s death, The Worldwide Church of God sold literature—*The Incredible Human Potential*, *MYSTERY OF THE AGES* and others—in bookstores throughout the English-speaking nations. Mr. Armstrong did this to reach an audience that would not otherwise request free literature, yet was willing to purchase it (and this was clearly explained at the Conference, as well as in *THE WORK OF GOD* book; no one voiced concerns). Again, this was done from 1978 to 1986, during the “back on track” years, which was also the zenith of the Philadelphian age. The Restored Church of God plans to follow Mr. Armstrong’s pattern. Of course, just as under Mr. Armstrong, all of this literature would always continue to be provided free of charge. Brethren, Mr. Pack would have carefully explained this to the Church at the right time, and how it was part of the grand pattern we inherited.

In fact, this new frontier for the Work was intended to be an inspiring surprise for God’s people, to be announced when the plan was nearing launch. Instead, the Church came to learn about it through the criticism of dissidents, and received a terribly skewed impression of the facts. One man belittled this incredible opportunity to advance God’s Work as “merchandising the truth.”

Interestingly, both men failed to quote Mr. Armstrong's words stating why selling literature in bookstores does not contradict Christ's instruction in Matthew 10:8. If they agree with Mr. Armstrong, why was it fine for WCG to have done this but not Restored? But the author of confusion would always seek to preempt what is good with a twisted version making it appear bad.

Again, rather than dealing with the situation as men—approaching the ministry with their “concerns” during the Conference—as soon as they left Headquarters they chose the cowardly path of sending unsolicited blind carbon copy emails to unsuspecting brethren.

Of the two men who left, one appears to be the primary perpetrator, while the other appears to have been “sucked in.” Just days before leaving, the latter man showed enthusiasm for God's Work. He seemed to be “on fire” for years—and yet it only took the influence of *one* “rotten apple” to lead him astray!

Brethren, learn from this tragic example! Humanity will experience 1,000 years of universal joy, peace and prosperity under Christ's divine rule on the earth. Yet, a sizeable number will freely give up everything as soon as Satan is “loosed for a little season.” Many millions will fall under his sway, quickly deceived into believing that the devil's way is right and God's Way is wrong and unjust! Satan is so effective at his craft of deception that he will be able to temporarily pull this off despite centuries of prior warning.

### **Learn From the Test**

Brethren, though trials are grievous at the time they are being experienced, we should actually *rejoice* whenever venomous attacks occur, just as the apostles did (Acts 5:41). Such trials remind us that Satan desires to sift us like wheat (Luke 22:31). He already has the whole world deceived (Rev. 12:9), and is looking for ways to deceive those who are holding to the truth. (Mr. Pack has said he regularly reads and rejoices in the spirit of Matthew 5:11-12. So should all of us.)

This is one of many tests foretold to come upon the Church in the end time. Just as the ministry of God's 20th-century servant was continuously attacked, escalating over his 52-year ministry, so will the ministry of God's 21st-century servant.

Most of you are aware of our tumultuous early years, as a number of staff members turned hostile and blew themselves up like spiritual “homicide bombers,” doing all they could to hinder the Church. Satan attempted to destroy this “short Work” (Rom. 9:27-29) before it even began.

Now recall what Mr. Armstrong had to endure during the *Philadelphian age*: The 1974 rebellion, in which thousands of brethren and many ministers defected. The 1979 receivership, in which the state of California attempted to commandeer God’s tithes. And then, after Mr. Armstrong’s death, the apostasy, in which ministers he believed to be loyal threw away *everything* he taught—and tens of thousands of members walked wholesale back into pagan traditions.

The first-century Church also experienced continual assaults—forged letters, counterfeit offshoots, true ministers being opposed by false ministers like Diotrephes (III John 9-10).

God, through the apostle Jude, called such deceiving imposters “spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; ragging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame” (Jude 12-13).

Notice that attacks always escalate over time. While this current trial is small by comparison, we can expect the same pattern to hold true: “But evil men and seducers shall wax *worse* and *worse*, deceiving, and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13).

Remember—our tribulation is NOW (Acts 14:22)! And realize that there will probably be another attempt to “answer” this article. (There was, in fact, and almost immediately. Additional ones came later from this duo.)

God will continue to allow those with poisonous attitudes to be purged from among His people: “They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (I John 2:19).

But what does God expect of us in light of the storms ahead? “But continue you in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them” (II Tim. 3:14). Only those who stay close to God, flee from seducers and resist the Laodicean tendency toward “itching ears” will endure to the end.

### **Attacks Come Before Leaps Forward**

For some time, perhaps about six months, or so, Mr. Pack spoke a number of times to the staff about major leaps forward that must be just over the horizon for the Work of God. This was because we were suffering a series of defections, difficulties, persecution and trials, including the death of his wife and the near death of one of his sons—severe trials for both the Church, collectively, and Mr. Pack, personally—among other things.

In fact, the Work did soon after witness far and away the greatest leaps (plural) forward we have seen. Very, very dramatic advancements came on the heels of these trials. Nothing that we have previously experienced compared to the kinds of announcements we went on to make and are still making.

Just as Mr. Armstrong endured intense trials prior to each breakthrough in preaching the gospel, during *this* final gun lap we saw the same—and will probably remain under greater or lesser attacks for the rest of the age.

The Church always used to understand that severe trials winnowed out trouble-makers—that they caused, as Mr. Armstrong put it, “all the rotten apples to fall from the tree.”

### **Satan Understands**

Satan can read the Bible. He knows this mighty Work is prophesied to be the most powerful in history, and he will stop at nothing to impede, cripple, hamper, oppose and obstruct it. The devil knows who we are, and what we represent—the kingdom of God in embryo, destined to replace him and his demons in ruling the earth. He HATES the message we announce! And he always attacks most fiercely just before God is about to propel the Work forward in a profound way.

Satan thought he had murdered God’s Church in the wake of the apostasy—but Christ kept His promise to protect it from destruction. The devil is furious!—enraged over the great progress of The Restored Church of God. He desperately wants to shut down its new Headquarters campus, Ambassador Center, *The World to Come* program and Ambassador Youth Camp, among so many other plans, announced and unannounced. Satan wants to put an end to the ever-increasing millions learning God’s truth within our “web traffic” and Internet rankings. His goal is to bring confusion among our growing congregations and scatter the flock.

Exciting developments are just around the corner. The more intense the attacks, the more God has in store for His people.

### **Be Sobered!**

Brethren, beware! This event should sober you. No one is immune! All of us must constantly be on guard and take to heart the apostle Peter’s warning: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8).

In closing, Christ commands, “love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44). But He knew that one cannot *love* his enemies unless he knows who ARE his

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enemies! Never forget the predicate within His instruction. Let’s pray for those who persecute and spitefully use us, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us—and love our enemies.





# SECTION III

# WHY ATTACKS MUST INCREASE AND INTENSIFY!

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Persecution is a fact of life for God’s true servants—and His true Church. The Restored Church of God is no exception, and will receive the brunt of persecution against God’s people *prior* to the Tribulation, when Satan will turn on the “remnant” of Laodicea (Rev. 12:17). This section explains why God’s Church stands squarely in Satan’s crosshairs.

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All who are evaluating The Restored Church of God should read this section very carefully. Mr. Armstrong often said, and you read this earlier, “If you want to know about us—ASK US! Don’t ask our critics. You already know what they will say.” Proverbs adds, “He that answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (18:13), and “He that is first in his own cause seems just; but his neighbor comes and searches him” (18:17). This section will not help those who have already decided to ignore these scriptures and believe our critics.

It *will* help others.

Since we do not compromise any of the doctrines restored to God’s Church, attacks and slander against us are inevitable and will grow continually worse. Humanly speaking, when this happens, we are at a “disadvantage” from other groups. First, we do not answer our accusers and, second, we do not sue those who slander or defame us (I Cor. 6:1-8).

Almost anything that people say or do to us can be done with near impunity, because this policy ensures that we will not counterattack. While we recognize that those who seek to harm us are neither “saints” (vs. 1-2) nor “brothers” (vs. 5), they may *appear* as such to the *simple* and *undiscerning*.

We also recognize that, when we are accused, some will interpret our silence as guilt. This concern is not sufficient for us to respond. We will not compromise God’s instruction regarding vengeance, retaliation and answering accusers.

Nevertheless, *tactics* have been employed by our enemies of which you should be aware. Since attacks will continue, recognizing these tactics will arm you to make a more informed decision about who and what—and all that—we are.

### Impersonators and Copycats

Paul suffered many kinds of persecution. Probably none were more unusual—or confusing to observers—than when he warned the Thessalonians about counterfeiters writing letters “*as from us*” (II Thes. 2:1-3). These cynical impersonators sought to cause confusion among brethren about the timing of Christ’s Return.

Recall that Paul’s *first* letter to the Thessalonians described his hope that Christ’s Second Coming would occur in his lifetime. Chapter 4 of the epistle makes this plain. In the interim *between* the two letters, Paul came to understand that he was wrong. This must have been terribly disappointing to first-century brethren who had to realize that Christ would return much later than they thought, and beyond their lifetimes!

I have seen people today become angry with Mr. Armstrong, and call him a false prophet, merely because Christ did not return as soon as Mr. Armstrong had hoped. Similarly, many in Thessalonica must have desperately wanted Paul to be *right* in his *misassessment* of Christ’s Return. They were even willing to deceive and cover the truth about his later *correct* understanding of timing. We expect similar copycat confusion that misguided or malevolent people perpetrate on unwitting victims.

We have had several copycat incidents since The Restored Church of God began. There will probably be more. At one point, someone attempted to copy our website, going so far as to create an alternate site under our name. Obviously, we were not consulted. The site was designed to appear to be ours, attacking another group as though we wrote it. Sadly, while it was an attack against *us*, it was designed to make us look as though *we were attacking others*. The message here is chilling—and eye-opening. Upon request, the webmaster controlling the site shut it down, but it reappeared later, only to be shut down again. On our official website, we have posted our policy about sites using our material.

Do not be deceived *first* by counterfeiters “as from us”!

In this age, copycatting or impersonating can take other forms. On one occasion, an impersonator signed me into the “guestbook” of another webpage, even though I never visit any of these sites. Others have ordered lit-

erature from us on behalf of people who did not request it. It has never been our policy to send anything that has not been personally requested!

### The Policy of “Big Lies”

Earlier in the book, I mentioned that Adolf Hitler understood the power of “the big lie.” Understanding the human tendency to more readily question *little lies*, he wrote that if one was determined to lie, he should tell a *big lie*, because he knew everyone would more readily assume it to be true.

If people will lie about Christ’s Return, they will lie about *anything*! John 8:44 calls Satan “the father of lies.” It is no surprise then that those he has captured are capable of truly horrific lies. God calls them “inventors of evil things” (Rom. 1:30)—but these “inventors” are inseparable from end-time prophecy.

All kinds of outrageous, vicious rumors have been spread about us, and primarily me. I am alleged to have done things so unspeakably evil and so numerous that, had I done them, I would have had little time for anything else. Perhaps the most amazing rumor is that I never knew Mr. Armstrong and was never a WCG minister or even a member there (I am also said to have no ordination certificate). Another particularly silly rumor actually has *Mr. Armstrong* disfellowshipping me from the WCG. The list of false charges against me is practically endless. But, in the end, there is no need to deny them because, besides the fact that it would dignify them, all reasonable people understand that they cannot possibly be true. Yet, I have watched gullible people swallow them whole.

You should expect this when dealing with my critics! Only people who love God’s full truth will see through absurd accusations! Will you be fooled?

### The New “Cottage Industry” of Modern “Church Reporters”

The apostasy has generated a culture of “journalists” representing Church “newspapers,” written in the spirit of *The National Enquirer*. They print *anything* from *anyone*. Their unstated goal is to report, and in fact promote, controversy and conflict. While they are convinced that they are “shedding light” on vital issues, they have sunk so deep into the sewer that they have forgotten the sun once shone brightly over God’s Church *without their help!*

If it would sell papers, certain reporters would *eagerly* stand at the foot of the stake interviewing people with opinions of Christ’s Crucifixion. Their interviews would no doubt include Pontius Pilate, Barabbas,

Caiaphas, Judas' relatives and any others who might bring "interest" and "perspective" and "voices of authority" to the event. They would solicit impressions and comments from Jesus' mother and siblings, and feel no shame! If the Crucifixion were dragging, because Christ was lingering alive on the stake, they would happily encourage others to "break His legs" or "ram Him with a spear" to add interest, excitement and more controversy. This could even trigger a whole new round of interviews and comments for additional articles.

After reporting Christ's death, they would tell themselves, and any foolish enough to listen to them, that they had served God's purpose—they had spread the "good news" of Christ's sacrifice! They had "informed" people. This only barely exaggerates.

It is also not an exaggeration to say that most of these reporters deeply resent both Mr. Armstrong and those who represent what he taught. They despise all HIERARCHICAL GOVERNMENT, which he taught—and God teaches—and assassinate any who practice it. However, these "journalists" are too cowardly to say this themselves. They work through surrogates and proxies eager to provide "information" or to be "interviewed" in pursuit of their "15 minutes of fame." The formal name for their reporting style is "slander by proxy."

God help these slanderers to see what they are doing and repent before it is too late! And may God help all who love the trash they spread to see what they have become addicted to!

On the other hand, a worldly religion writer for a Southern California newspaper sent a sincere request for material for an article she was preparing. Her letter made it *appear* the inquiry might be bogus. We thought it might have been intended to waste our time. It was not and we did offer help. A number of people (including ministers) have written us, representing *fictitious people*. Others write anonymously and, in some cases, will not identify themselves under any circumstances. These signs of the times will only worsen.

### **Not Our Policy to Attack Others**

It is not the policy of The Restored Church of God to insult, condemn or attack individuals. Philadelphians (those who are to be known for brotherly love) cannot return attack against other human beings—though they should be willing to vigorously DEFEND TRUTH with their lives.

I will always speak out boldly against *false doctrine*. Just doing this is enough to bring persecution and attacks from those who disagree, making persecution a *fact of life* for anyone FULLY HOLDING FAST.

Enduring persecution is a big part of the Christian path for those who will not compromise (II Tim. 3:12).

Grasp this powerful message from the pages of Church history!

Jesus said, “The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, *they will also persecute you*” (John 15:20). He begins this warning by reminding His disciples to “*Remember* the word that I said unto you” because He must have warned them of this more than once.

Virtually every splinter contains people who desire all of the “hidden treasure” of true doctrine. This is why the big groups (and some smaller ones) are steadily losing members to Restored. This will continue to increase until all those with the Holy Spirit return to God’s Church. This attrition is enough to make the splinters feel threatened by our existence. While the number coming is not yet really large, it is now growing rapidly, and represents a powerful indictment of the doctrinal unsoundness of the splinters.

### **False Accusations Will Increase and Intensify**

All of the splinters may one day find that they face a painful choice: (1) Accuse me of attacking them and sowing discord in their churches or (2) repent of their heresies! There are no other choices. The latter is too humbling and painful so they must, *of necessity*, accuse God’s Church or, more likely, *me* personally. Inventing false *accusations* is certainly no problem for anyone willing to teach false *doctrines*. Also, some character assassination has come from those who left us *for doctrinal reasons*. I recognize that all these compromising groups may someday be “forced” to mark me because of steady losses to The Restored Church of God.

Here is one dramatic illustration: Several people contacted me about my having been “marked” as an “enemy of the Church” by the leader of one large splinter. (I have been marked by more than this leader.) The use of the term “enemy of the Church” for one who will not compromise sets a precedent in this age, but it is *not* unprecedented in Church history.

Proving this leader’s charges false was unnecessary, because virtually everything I do is public (books, booklets, magazines, articles, sermons and broadcasts). He knew, or could have known, that his charges were ridiculous.

### **We Must Be “Apt to Teach” About Persecution**

I cannot be silent about understanding the lessons of persecution simply because someone *might* think that even INSTRUCTION about it is “answer-

ing my accusers.” God’s ministers must be “apt [able] to teach.” I must periodically teach what God expects Christians to know about persecution, accusation, confusion, slander, etc. I have done this at extraordinary length. If I remain silent on matters of basic Christian instruction, merely because I am under attack, then our attackers have rendered me mute—unable to correctly teach this subject to God’s people, and to properly inoculate them.

The end time is the most dangerous and difficult in Church history—hence this book’s title. Tragically, most brethren entered this last phase of the New Testament Church assuming that they were more ready for it than they were! In fact, most have proven to be almost completely UNPREPARED!

### Who is Attacking Whom?

There is a predictable pattern to how the “accuser of the brethren” works. Note it well. Satan has long accused God of being unfair—unjust—to him. Understand the devil’s mind. Because of who he is, he has no choice but to accuse God. In Satan’s world, the perpetrator is always the victim, and the victim is always the perpetrator. In his world, where *he* is “the destroyer,” he claims God wants to “destroy him.” When cast into the bottomless pit, the devil will no doubt protest that he is a victim of injustice until he “hits bottom” (of course, I realize it is *bottomless*).

Do not be ignorant of Satan’s wiles, depths and devices!

Certainly, *if* one wanted to accuse, making someone look as bad as possible (to divert attention from himself), a brilliant tactic would be to say that the person he was accusing is accusing him! As with this world’s “spinmaster” god (II Cor. 4:4), what more effective method could be used than to portray oneself as a victim? Some groups attack under the guise of claiming they are being attacked!

My aforementioned marking brought with it something rarely seen to this point. Several lay members reported that *they* have also been marked because of their affiliation. This action also makes its own statement from Church history!

This pattern has always come from *two* sources.

*First*, those holding to the full truth are eventually accused, attacked and expelled, if they do not leave first, from the organization that they attend because they will not submit to a wholesale or *partial* sell-out of God’s doctrines! This is why the WCG disfellowshipped me (early 1993).

*Second*, civil governments inevitably become involved in directly persecuting God’s people! This is sobering to ponder. But it is worse



when supposed *members* betray true brethren to the authorities, hoping it will precipitate greater persecution! God's Church has already experienced some of these "shades of Judas" in people purporting to be brethren. Before the age is over, the evil of human nature in false brethren will prove far worse than most would dream!

Remain vigilant! Do not be taken in!

God promises to take Philadelphians away from the worst of what lies ahead. But we have to and do expect more persecution before we flee. As explained, we must "turn the other cheek," "love our enemies," "bless those who curse us" and continually "pray for them that despitefully use [us] and persecute [us]" (Matt. 5:39-44). Christ's instruction is incomplete without verse 45! He makes plain that it is *this* overall attitude that makes Christians the "children of God." This powerful statement takes faith to practice.

Verses 11 and 12 are also to be practiced when facing persecution: "*Blessed* are you when *all manner* of evil is said against you *falsely* for My Name's sake. *Rejoice* and be *exceeding glad*, for great is your reward in the kingdom of God."

This is our focus and we will not be deterred from it—but we also bear no ill will toward those who attack us.

### "Blessed Are You"

Members of the true Church realize that they are *blessed people!* To harbor ill will or bitterness when persecuted ensures that we lose our reward. Anger, bitterness, counterattack and ill will are not compatible with "rejoic[ing] and be[ing] exceeding glad" in the face of unjust attacks! Be honest and ask yourself how one could have both attitudes simultaneously. Those practicing real godly love have *no alternative* but to practice God's instructions toward the people perpetrating evil against them!

Philadelphians and Laodiceans are brethren. Tares are not! People cannot be converted or remain so, even in a lukewarm fashion, if they viciously attack one another! If others do not understand this, and perpetrate evil against us, we strive to "overcome evil with *good*" (Rom. 12:21). Tremendous confidence springs from handling attacks this way—and the bonus is that those practicing this approach *feel* better after doing it. Paul said that he was glad to "know [Christ]...and the *fellowship of His sufferings*" (Phil. 3:10). He understood that suffering strengthens people. When it is a result of persecution, God wants the victim focusing on his eternal reward! (Paul went on to tie his suffering to the hope of the resurrection.)

### The Worst is Yet to Come

Six thousand years of man's rule are nearing an end. The *complete* breakdown of principles, values, morals, character, integrity and respect for all law and authority will soon strike the entire world in a terrible and final way! Christ foretold a return to the "days of Noah" and "Sodom and Gomorrah." Have no illusion. Part of the end-time test for Christians is *whether* and *how well* they handle accusers, slanderers, deceivers (II Tim. 3:12-14) and copycats. Paul warned, "evil men and seducers will wax [grow] *worse and worse*."

The Restored Church of God has had more than its share of this *worsening*! We now expect it, and God knows we can endure more than we think—with His help! When attacks occur, I find myself *encouraged*. I know *who* is behind them and *why* he aims so many accusations at us. We know who we are and so does Satan!

Many have found the various sections of this book to be very encouraging. You may urge anyone hearing false accusations against The Restored Church of God or myself to carefully read this book. Once again, it represents our statement about accusers, lies and persecution. By internalizing this final section, you will understand *why* attacks must continue, increase and intensify!

Finally, ask: Why has no one else really even *tried* to address the many verses on this subject? Why are you only hearing this kind of instruction from us?

When further attacks occur against The Restored Church of God, what will *you* do? Whom will *you* choose to believe? Will you believe obvious lies—because you do not understand that accusers should not even be answered, let alone believed!

## Other Splinter Explanation Packet Literature

### THE TRUE CHURCH – One Organization, or Many?

Jesus Christ built His Church nearly 2,000 years ago—and promised it would never be destroyed (Matt. 16:18)! Is this Church and Christ's Body still a single unified organization? Or, after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong in 1986, and the prophesied "falling away" (II Thes. 2:3), did it split into multiple organizations, groups and scattered individuals? Christ is not divided, but can circumstances divide His Church and Body? Do—or can—the actions of men make this possible? The Catholics, the Protestants, the WCG apostates and the splinter leaders all have clear teachings on this subject. What did Mr. Armstrong teach—and does it align with the Bible? This book presents facts, history and the proof of Scripture. It brings PLAIN ANSWERS!

### “ANOINT YOUR EYES” – Christ's Warning to His People

Christ warns Laodiceans to “anoint your eyes”—WHY? What did He mean? WHO did He mean—and how can you know? This all-important instruction, to *all* Christians living in the last days, *must* be understood. This extensive book—the most crucial written to the WCG splinters—thoroughly covers things never before explained, and in extraordinary detail. For those hoping to escape the Great Tribulation, it reveals *exactly* what Christ meant and how to apply this most critical warning!

### THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD – Understanding Offices and Duties

The Church of God—the biblical Body of Christ—is not divided, and is the only place where the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is present, the only organization Christ leads. He has placed *offices* and assigned special *duties* within His Church. All of the splinters have rejected God's government! This has led to mass confusion about these God-ordained offices and duties. What *exactly* is a deacon?—a local elder?—a preaching elder?—a pastor?—an evangelist?—a prophet?—an apostle? What about “teachers”? Who are the “messengers” to the seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3? What do they do? Where will the Two Witnesses come from? How does the “watchman” of Ezekiel 33:7 function in *this age*? How do all these work and serve, and in UNITY? Who holds AUTHORITY to ordain today? Are splinter ordinations valid? Which office(s) can “bind and loose”? Can anyone add truth or traditions to the Church? Who is authorized to make Church-wide administrative judgments? Who supervises all congregations? This vital book answers all of these questions—and many more!

### THE WORK OF GOD – Its Final Chapter!

Herbert W. Armstrong ANNOUNCED the kingdom of God to the world and proclaimed the special warning to the modern nations of Israel for 52 years! Did he teach that his death would end this commission, believing both duties to be his own “private work”? How did he instruct his successor? Does “the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matt. 24:14) before the “end come” still apply? What of “go...and TEACH all nations...ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20)? What about “prophecy again” in Revelation 10:11? What is the gospel? Is Christ part of it? Did Mr. Armstrong teach—or does the Bible—that God's people should give to relief organizations and disaster victims? What did Jesus say? Also, what about “local” or “personal evangelism”? Why has The Restored Church of God rewritten *all* the literature of the Worldwide Church of God? What was our STRATEGIC PLAN? What are our two OPERATIONAL PLANS? What does prophecy say about the final Work of God?

### WHY THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD? – Should You Join?

There are over 300 offshoots of the Worldwide Church of God. Most believe there are much too many groups—and already “something for everyone.” Was another really

necessary, particularly when many are trying to “get the groups together”? The answer is a resounding “Yes!” This short book introduces The Restored Church of God by answering the most basic, commonly asked questions about us. We have carefully produced this material for all who want to understand the Worldwide Church of God apostasy—and what to DO about it!

### **SURVIVING “PERILOUS TIMES”**

Civilization has entered the “last days”—II Timothy 3:1. The context through chapter 4, verse 4, reveals that “perilous times” have come upon both the world *and* the Church. There are now many kinds of deception and “sleight of men” (Eph. 4:14) being foisted on unsuspecting and gullible brethren. This volume addresses some of the worst of those deceptions, and assists in helping you survive them all!

### **THERE CAME A FALLING AWAY**

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God for 52 years, teaching hundreds of true doctrines. He proved them from the Bible and told us to do the same. His successors changed them *all*. Do you think *some* changes were right? Do you realize ALL were wrong? Have you recognized them? Here they are!

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