

THE
TRUE
CHURCH

ONE ORGANIZATION, OR MANY?

by David C. Pack

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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!

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INTRODUCTION

This volume was written several years after the other books in the *Splinter Explanation Packet*. With the passing of time it became absolutely necessary. Here is why.

The United Church of God (UCG) split in the winter of 2010-11. As events played out in a long fight toward such a major split, it became clear that virtually all of God's people had lost sight of one of the Bible's very greatest doctrines. The public nature of the argument involved a tremendous number of "postings" from various ministers on both sides of the fight. A variety of ministers who left or who were put out of UCG posted opinions about the "problems" dividing the two sides. Personalities were mentioned and either attacked or defended. The subjects of "ethics" and "love," among others, were invoked time and again as each side attempted to gain the high ground before the thousands of UCG members watching. Quite literally, hundreds of thousands of words were written by parties on both sides in an attempt to bring proper "focus" to what was happening, or to what would happen if the problems were not addressed.

The greatest issue never arose.

Questions Never Asked

Before and during the split, it was tacitly assumed that a "true Church" was merely dividing into *two* "true Churches." Each side of course

believed that it was the *other side* that was wrong. (When is this not the case?) Over half of UCG's pastors, plus up to 100 local elders and retired ministers left (over half UCG's total ordained ministers stayed)—followed by something under half the brethren. Neither side suggested, nor even believed, that those who were departing (members and ministers) were “leaving the Church”—or “leaving the Body of Christ.” And both sides certainly believed and talked as though Christ continued to be the “Head” of their organizations—old and new.

Whether Christ leads *either* organization, or *ever* led UCG in the first place, seemed never to enter the public discussion. Neither then of course did *which one* of the two groups is the true Church—never mind did the question of whether *both* might *not* be. If even a single minister on either side was concerned about this, it never became evident. And finally, neither did the question arise of where *is* Christ's Church if *both* organizations are not!

The United Church of God and the new Church of God, a Worldwide Association (COGwa) are far from the only organizations and groups that no longer understand what *is* God's Church—and what *is* the Body of Christ. For instance, you will see that the Living Church of God (LCG) has also completely lost this towering truth, as well as virtually *all* of the great truths connected to it.

With so much confusion surrounding this *all-important* understanding, the matter could no longer be left unaddressed.

Necessary Overlap

Since the subject of the true Church and Christ's Body is discussed in a number of other parts of the *Splinter Explanation Packet*, there is certain overlap between this book and the material found in other splinter books. At the time of their writing, I did not anticipate the *universal chaos* that would come to reign over this subject. Considering our long-held belief while in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), no one could have anticipated this.

A number of sections from the other splinter books were brought to and repeated for context within this subject. Understand why. Much of *this* book first appeared as an Open Letter to all of the splinters in mid-January 2011. This letter was originally posted with the belief that it would bring closure to the subject for those who still cared about what Mr. Armstrong taught, and about what the Bible teaches. However, it was immediately read by many thousands of people. The result was that it caused an uproar. It helped so many brethren in UCG, including some

considering going with COGwa—but it also caused many in LCG and other groups to reconsider where they were—that it became necessary to expand it into its own small book.

If you are reading the other books to the splinters you will see these crucial sections repeated in different contexts there. Realize that the book has been greatly strengthened above the Open Letter with a number of additional elements having been included. If you read the letter, you should still read this book.

Every Bible discussion today among God’s people should start with the single question of where is God’s Church and Christ’s Body. The subjects of God’s government, the true gospel, the Law, the Sabbath, the Holy Days, tithing, the truth of salvation, virtually all elements of prophecy—and every other truth in the Bible—start with, and flow directly off of, where is the Church that Jesus Christ built.

Therefore, any thorough explanation bringing the truth about what *is* the Church that Christ built would necessarily take its place among the most central books to the splinters. Then realize that, in fact, the *GOVERNMENT OF GOD* book stands *inseparable* from this one. You cannot understand either one without the other. It will be obvious to the reader that the truth about either subject *automatically* leads to the other one—and that both of these just as automatically lead to certain other truths.

Critical Thinking

Almost everyone swallows what is presented to them without exercising any in-depth analysis. They do not routinely “prosecute” ideas, statements and “facts” for whether they are true or false. In short, they do not bring *critical thinking* to even the most important matters at hand—where *eternal life* and *eternal death* are at stake.

Here is the best definition of critical thinking that I have seen: “Critical thinking clarifies goals, examines assumptions, discerns hidden values, evaluates evidence, accomplishes actions and assesses conclusions.” It is this level of thinking that is now required of you.

The problem everywhere today—in the world and among God’s people? Almost no one any longer practices *critical thinking*!

A colossal doctrine—one of the very greatest in the Bible—has been completely lost by almost all of the splinters and slivers that came out of the Worldwide Church of God. Incredibly, virtually no one even knows anything changed...

LOST UNDERSTANDING

Jesus Christ said, “I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18). The apostle Paul recorded, “He [Christ] is the Head of *the Body, the Church*” (Col. 1:18), as well as “[God] gave [Christ] to be the Head over all things to *the Church, which is His Body*” (Eph. 1:22-23). What did Christ and Paul mean? There are only two possible positions on this: (1) Christ built one unified organization, or (2) His Church and Body does—or can under certain circumstances—consist of *several* or *many* organizations, including scattered individuals.

It has finally come time—once and for all—to address this question in a comprehensive way. Once-basic understanding has been corrupted throughout the WCG offshoots today. This book clears up *all* confusion for those with an open mind. It brings facts, history, the proof of Scripture—and PLAIN ANSWERS!

Overview

This volume will be like *nothing* you have ever read. It will examine what the Catholics teach—what the Protestants teach—and what Mr. Armstrong taught. Then it will look at what the apostates who suckled in the lap of Protestant professors came to believe—before looking at what the splinter leaders now teach. These are *your* leaders, men who themselves *unwittingly* suckled in the lap of the *apostates*. All of this will be in their own words. You will not have to believe me, but merely your own eyes.

Finally, it will also examine in detail whether Mr. Armstrong's position is supported by God's Word. The book will close answering common questions, addressing popular objections and clarifying inescapable implications. Here is a sampling of these questions:

- How can Christ have a Philadelphian *Church* and a Laodicean *Church*, and yet still lead only *one* true Church? Are not Laodiceans God's people, too—are they not *also* His true Church?
- If this is the Laodicean age, are not Philadelphians just mixed among Laodiceans within all the splinters?
- How can one have God's Spirit, but still be outside His true Church?
- Was the scattering of God's people prophesied to happen? And does this mean it is God's will?
 - Where has Christ's Body been since Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986?
 - Did the apostles Peter and Paul run separate operations—separate true churches—in the first century?
 - Why do not the various "Churches of God" merge into one large organization?

What follows is so powerful—and so clear!—that you will fight anger at those who have seduced you! You will almost certainly also fight embarrassment at how you could let it happen on a subject so big—so central to the whole Bible. You will see that you have been deceived about what Herbert W. Armstrong taught. You will *never* see your present situation the same way again. What follows is compelling, fascinating history—recent and distant—along with the plain Word of God.

The patient reader will not be disappointed.

Do You Care?

Some will see the length of this book and not read it. Others may only read parts of it. If you are not going to read it *all*, stop now. Those who read it in its entirety will be thankful for the rest of their life—and for eternity—that they read *every word!* Read with an open mind. If you came through the WCG, you proved what is taught here. You believed it. You can believe and prove it again. In fact, you will see more proof than you dreamed possible of *exactly* what Jesus Christ built.

Of course, if you do not care about this doctrine, or if your mind is made up, what is written here will not help you. It would just confuse you with the facts.

This book will be labeled "divisive" and "exclusive." But of which true biblical beliefs and practices would this not be the case? For in-

stance, true Christians keep the Sabbath. This *divides* them from all others who do not. It also necessarily *excludes* these others from true Christianity. Consider. The doctrines of tithing—Holy Day observance—baptism and repentance—salvation—the gospel—and so many others—all do the same. On the matter of the one true Church, God in His Word defines who He includes and who He excludes. Those who teach the truth cannot be concerned with what critics will say. Their focus is on restoring what has been lost or forgotten—the latter being the case here.

The apostasy has produced a wide range of ideas about what is true and what is false doctrine. Of course, every teaching is important within God's Plan. But a few are so central that they affect almost every *other* teaching a Christian must hold dear. One doctrine stands alongside the very gospel itself in importance.

What is the true Church?

Plain Teaching

Most do not realize that the ministers of traditional Christianity hold a clear and widely accepted teaching on what is the Church and Body of Christ. You will see that Mr. Armstrong rejected this popular view with no less clarity and conviction than he rejected Sunday-keeping in favor of Sabbath observance, or Christmas and Easter in favor of keeping God's seven annual Holy Days. Many examples of doctrine could be cited demonstrating that Mr. Armstrong taught the truth—and why—and rejected error—and why. He did not hold an ambivalent position on the Sabbath, the Holy Days, tithing, the gospel—or what is—and is NOT—the Church that Jesus Christ built! Neither was he ambivalent on the counterfeits that false Christianity used to replace them.

In the past, God's people all accepted the simplicity in Christ's Matthew 16:18 statement—"I will build My Church"—and that it was solely fulfilled in the Worldwide Church of God, under Herbert W. Armstrong's leadership. (You will see those who claim Mr. Armstrong taught otherwise are confused.) We knew the Church was a single, unified organization—and that it was the *only place* Jesus Christ was Head. We knew it could be traced through 2,000 years of history. We also understood without the slightest ambiguity that the true Church was also the undivided *Body of Christ*. In addition, we knew that some people in the WCG did not have the Holy Spirit, and were thus not part of Christ's Body. Conversely, we recognized that there were occasionally people who received God's Spirit outside the WCG (Mr. Armstrong explained this) but that

they would *always* be led to the one place Jesus Christ was working and is the Head (he also explained this)!

But all of this changed.

The true Church and Body of Christ doctrine has become terribly confused in the minds of thousands of brethren who once thought they clearly understood it. Sadly, so many no longer remember what *is*, and could never be, the Body of Christ—that is, where it starts and where it stops—what it *is* and is *not*. Opinions now abound. *How* this came to be is largely a mystery to most of God’s people. Many think it has always been this way. Why have so many forgotten that Christ is not divided (I Cor. 1:10, 13)? What happened? Why do so few any longer believe that God works solely in a single Church—*one unified organization*?

Related Subjects

Bear in mind subjects that are impossible to separate from what is the true Church, and that must necessarily appear at least for reference in the book:

(1) How Christ *governs* His Church

(2) Who has the *authority* to teach what *is* the truth—and therefore who does *not*

(3) Who has the authority to do God’s Work—carries the *commission* to preach and publish the gospel of the kingdom of God (and all other truths) in all nations—and therefore who does *not*

(4) In parallel, who has God’s authority (again, carries the *commission*) to warn the nations of modern Israel—and therefore who does *not*

(5) Directly related to 3 and 4, who has the authority to take up *tithes*—and also who does *not*

(6) Who has the authority to ordain ministers, establish policy, make crucial judgments that affect the whole Church, disfellowship heretics, anoint the sick, feed the flock—feed YOU!—or *correct* YOU!—and, of course, who does *not*

Mr. Armstrong was no less clear on *all* of these points—and he repeated himself often regarding them.

“Obeying the Truth”

Even those who are newly converted understand that Christians *obey* God. They know that they must *obey* the Ten Commandments and other of His laws. Now understand a vital point that almost no one considers—and it has everything to do with obedience. Most of God’s ministers have been derelict in teaching this *closely related* Bible principle.

In numerous verses God specifically commands His true followers to also “obey the *truth*.” Most generally think of God’s many truths as things to be *believed*—or *understood*—not as things that must be *obeyed*. Has this not generally been your thinking? In fact, how often have you heard Bible doctrines described in this context?

Here is what the apostle Peter wrote, and it introduces how obedience to *truth* is tied to conversion. Read carefully: “Seeing you have *purified your souls in obeying the truth* through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren...” (1 Pet. 1:22). The Greek word for *obey* carries the additional meaning of “attentive hearkening [listening],” “compliance” and “submission.” This is strong.

Further, obedience to points of truth is seen in this passage to be inseparable from three things: (1) the purity of one’s conversion, (2) the role of God’s Spirit—the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:17; 15:26)—actively assisting in obedience to true doctrine and (3) how one genuinely loves the brethren. The last point becomes very difficult (in fact, impossible) when most of one’s brethren are scattered throughout other competing, disagreeing organizations where he can never see or know them. This verse cannot be read any other way.

But the subject grows *much* more serious.

Next notice what the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians: “O *foolish Galatians*, who has *bewitched* you, that you should not *obey the truth*, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth...?” (3:1). The Galatians had grown foolish, allowing themselves to be tricked—“bewitched”—into believing something other than the truth. (In their case, they had lost sight of the true gospel and fallen under a curse—chapter 1, verses 6-9.)

Two chapters later Paul summarized what happened: “You did run well; who did *hinder* you [Greek: “beat back”] that you should not *obey the truth*?” (5:7). This latter verse describes the problem with the splinters today. Now think. Scores of thousands of God’s people once understood exactly what was the Church that Jesus built. For decades they “ran well.” But today, having themselves grown foolish, they have also been “bewitched” and “beaten back”—now having become disobedient in belief.

This sets up a final passage that puts the gravity of the matter into its fullest context—that of how GOD sees disobedience to truth.

Paul wrote the Romans about some who were “contentious,” who wanted to argue about established truth: “But unto them that are contentious, and do not *obey the truth*, but *obey unrighteousness*, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does *evil*” (2:8-9).

God views those who will not hold to the truth—will not *obey* it—as obeying UNRIGHTEOUSNESS! Even beginning Bible students know that, “*All unrighteousness is SIN*” (I John 5:17).

How many of God’s people even remember this?

Disbelief of truth is now seen to be SIN! We could ask: How much *worse* is the sin of rejecting truths that stand among the greatest in all of God’s Word? The close of Romans 2:8-9 brings this subject into perspective. It speaks of God’s “indignation” and “wrath”—and of the “tribulation” and “anguish” He has prepared for those (“*every soul*”) who commit what He calls the “evil” of disobeying truth.

May this reality guide your thinking as you read!

Fundamental Questions

So then, the following question now towers over the splinters collectively: Is there just one true Church—*only* one place where Christ is *leading*, though He may have scattered lukewarm sheep (fulfilling Daniel 12:7) going astray in a variety of different groups and organizations? Or, is Christ’s leadership of His Church now split—divided—between competing, disagreeing and multiplying groups, *all* carrying His authority and approval? In other words, is there still a single unified true Church led by Christ, or are there now *many* “true churches” (plus scattered individuals), *all* connected to and led by Christ? If He built only one organization, where is it? What could be more important?

What have you come to believe?

As we introduce the subject, several more questions arise, and they are also big: Would Christ leave in doubt what He built for all those who sincerely wanted to know? Of course not! Could a matter of such SUPREME IMPORTANCE be left anything but *crystal clear* for those He was working with? Of course not! And would the devil not present one or more counterfeits—just as he does *every other doctrine of God*? Of course he would!

These most fundamental questions should be burning issues among God’s people today. The challenge and test for you is to discern the *truth*. Soon, an absolutely clear decision will stand before you. There will be no escaping one of two simple positions.

THE CATHOLIC TEACHING

We are now prepared to examine how a variety of mainstream churches and well-known religionists define the Body of Christ and the Church they believe Jesus built. Study begins with the Roman Catholic Church—the only place to start. Without this foundation, the Protestant position cannot be understood. Further, without understanding *why* the Protestants took the position they did, what the WCG apostates were taught—and what they subsequently taught the splinter leaders—also cannot be understood!

Some basic history. Soon after Jesus built His Church in AD 31, the counterfeit movement began, eventually centering in Rome. The Catholics also point to Matthew 16:18, with Jesus there supposedly building their church on the apostle Peter. The facts of history demonstrate that the counterfeit movement gained momentum in the “Lost Century” between approximately AD 70 and 170. The leaders of this developing false system well understood the importance of *also* teaching that there was no other true church but their own—and that salvation was tied to it. They could hardly teach less. How many would depart to follow leaders who taught that salvation could be achieved in any number of churches, including where they already were? Wrong on virtually *every other* biblical doctrine, even the *Catholics* knew they could not compromise the one true Church doctrine! They have not forgotten this for 2,000 years.

This church remains unafraid to uphold what so many lukewarm (at best) ministers from the WCG are now ashamed to teach.

Siding with Catholics?

Something must be acknowledged from the beginning. All who would argue that this book “sides with the Catholics” or draws authority from a system that *all* of God’s people know to be false, consider this. Any who reject the Catholic teaching on the singleness of the Church *necessarily* default to the only other possible position—that of the Protestants. The Church is either confined to one organization (as the Catholics teach), or it is spread across multiple organizations and groups (the Protestant teaching). There is no room for middle ground with such a black and white teaching. To *reject* one is to *accept* the other. This conclusion is *inescapable*—one must be correct! If one is to reject both positions merely because false churches teach them, the only other position is to believe that Christ did not build His Church, thus making Him a liar, and the Bible is not worth the paper it is written on. Before continuing, come to grips with the fact that those who attack the Catholic position in effect *defend* the Protestant position, and vice versa. Simple logic permits no other stance. So then we are left to pursue the TRUTH—what does GOD say? This comes later.

First this. The Catholics also disfellowship (excommunicate) wayward members. Should the true Church then conclude it must reject the principle of disfellowshipment? Additionally, we have long understood that the Adventists observe the Sabbath, Mormons tithe, Baptists immerse converts, Jehovah’s Witnesses reject pagan holidays, and other groups hold to certain correct beliefs. Does this mean the Church of God must *reject* the Sabbath, tithing, baptism by immersion, and *embrace* holidays of pagan origin to be different? Of course not! Come to grips with this before continuing. And that Mr. Armstrong—who taught the principle of disfellowshipment and that there is one unified Church—was unafraid to agree with the Catholics.

To establish Catholic belief, we start with the present. A paper approved by Pope Benedict XVI, titled “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” posed this question: “What is the meaning of the affirmation that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church?” The paper quotes the conclusions of Pope Paul VI during the Second Vatican Council in 1964 from his *Dogmatic Constitutions on the Church* (emphasis mine throughout, except for italicized document names):

“Christ ‘established here on earth’ *only one Church* and instituted it as a ‘visible and spiritual community,’ that from its beginning and throughout

the centuries has always existed and will always exist, and in which *alone* are found all the elements that Christ himself instituted. ‘This *one Church* of Christ, which we confess in the Creed as *one*, holy, catholic and apostolic... This Church, constituted and organised in this world as a society, *subsists in the Catholic Church*, governed by the successor of Peter and the Bishops in communion with him.’”

“...‘subsistence’ means this perduring [long-lasting], historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, *in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth.*”

“...the word ‘subsists’ can only be attributed to the *Catholic Church alone* precisely because it refers to the mark of unity that we profess in the symbols of the faith (I believe...in the ‘one’ Church); and this ‘one’ Church subsists in the Catholic Church.”

Notice that Catholic leaders, including the pope, are perfectly willing to offend over one billion Protestants regarding this doctrine while ministers in the splinters are *not* willing to teach it. When this paper was released in June 2007, the *Associated Press* reported the following in an article titled “Pope: Other Christian Denominations Not True Churches”:

“For the second time in a week, Pope Benedict XVI has corrected what he says are erroneous interpretations of the Second Vatican Council, reasserting the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church and saying other Christian *communities* were either defective or not true churches.

“Benedict approved a document released Tuesday from his old office, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which repeated church teaching on Catholic relations with other Christians.

“While there was nothing doctrinally new in the document, it nevertheless prompted swift criticism from Protestants, Lutherans and other Christian denominations spawned by the 16th century reformation...”

“The new document—formulated as five questions and answers—restates key sections of a 2000 text the pope wrote when he was prefect of the congregation, ‘Dominus Iesus,’ which riled Protestant, Lutheran and other Christian denominations because it said they were not true churches but merely ecclesial communities and therefore did not have the ‘means of salvation.’

“‘Christ “established here on earth” only one Church,’ said the document...”

“The other communities ‘cannot be called “churches” in the proper sense’ because they do not have apostolic succession—the ability to trace their bishops back to Christ’s original apostles—and therefore their priestly ordinations *are not valid*, it said.

“In a statement headlined ‘Lost Chance,’ Lutheran Bishop Wolfgang Huber argued that ‘it would also be completely sufficient if it were to be said that the reforming churches are “not churches in the sense required here” or that they are “churches of another type”—but none of these bridges is used in the “answers.””

Here is another excerpt from Pope Paul VI’s paper, in the chapter titled “The Mystery of the Church.” Note his use and understanding of I Timothy 3:15, which he quotes:

“The one Mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all...”

“This is the *sole Church* of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be *one*, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after His Resurrection, entrusted to Peter’s pastoral care...commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it...and which he raised up for all ages as ‘the pillar and mainstay of the truth’ (I Tim. 3:15). This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists *in the Catholic Church...*”

Through the Centuries

Next come influential Catholic thinkers, starting from very early in the counterfeit church’s development. History demonstrates continuity of Catholic thought and position through the centuries. Numerous sources are quoted solely to demonstrate what the Protestants were up against when they left to form numerous offshoots! Grasping this is absolutely crucial to appreciating material that follows:

Origen (AD 250): “If someone...wants to be saved, let him come into this house [the Catholic church] so that he may be able to attain his salvation...Let no one, then, be persuaded otherwise, nor let anyone deceive himself: Outside of this house, that is, outside of the Church, no one is saved; for, if anyone should go out of it, he is guilty of his own death” (*Homilies on Joshua 3:5*).

Cyprian of Carthage (AD 251): “Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress [a schismatic church] is separated from the promises of the Church, nor will he that forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is an alien, a worldling, and an enemy. He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother” (*The Unity of the Catholic Church* 6, 1st ed.).

“Outside the Church there is no Holy Spirit, sound faith moreover cannot exist, not alone among heretics, but even among those who are established in schism” (*Treatise on Rebaptism* 10 [AD 256]).

Augustine (AD 354-430): “No man can find salvation except in the Catholic Church. Outside the Catholic Church one can have everything except salvation. One can have honor, one can have the sacraments, one can sing alleluia, one can answer amen, one can have faith in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and preach it too, but never can one find salvation except in the Catholic Church” (*Sermo ad Caesariensis Ecclesia plebem*).

Pope Sylvester II (AD 999-1003): “I profess that outside the Catholic Church no one is saved” (Profession of Faith made as Archbishop of Rheims, June, AD 991).

Francis of Assisi (AD 1182-1226): “And all of us humbly entreat and beseech everyone, all nations and all men in all the earth who are, and who shall be, that we may all of us persevere in the true faith: for otherwise no one can be saved” (*Apostolic Digest*, Michael Malone, Book 3: “The Book of Faith,” Chapter 1, “There is No Salvation Except in the Catholic Faith”).

IV Lateran Council (AD 1215): “There is only one universal Church of the faithful, outside which there is absolutely no salvation” (*Apostolic Digest*, Michael Malone, Book 2: “The Book of Salvation”).

Pope Boniface VIII (AD 1294-1303): “Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic. We believe in her firmly and we confess with simplicity that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins...and she represents one sole mystical body whose Head is Christ... There had been at the time of the deluge only one ark of Noah, prefiguring the one Church, which ark, having been finished to a single cubit,

had only one pilot and guide, i.e., Noah, and we read that, outside of this ark, all that subsisted on the earth was destroyed...”

“We declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman [Catholic] Pontiff” (*Bull Unam Sanctam*, 1302).

A Catholic commentator said this about the previous statement:

“This means, and has always meant, that salvation and unity exist only within the Catholic Church, and that members of heretical groups cannot be considered as ‘part’ of the Church of Christ. This doctrine has been the consistent teaching of the Popes throughout the centuries.

“Further, it is dogmatically set forth that no authority in the Church, no matter how highly placed, may lawfully attempt to change the clear meaning of this (or any) infallible dogma” (Catholic brochure, *No Salvation Outside the Church*).

Pope Eugene IV (AD 1431-1447): “It [the Catholic church] firmly believes, professes, and proclaims that those not living within the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics cannot become participants in eternal life, but will depart ‘into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels’ [Matt. 25:41], unless before the end of life the same have been added to the flock; and that the unity of the ecclesiastical body is so strong that only to those remaining in it are the sacraments of the Church of benefit for salvation” (*Bull Cantate Domino*).

Louis Marie de Montfort (AD 1673-1716), influential French priest and author: “There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. Anyone who resists this truth perishes” (Catholic brochure, *No Salvation Outside the Church*).

Pope Pius IX (AD 1846-1878): “The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman: unique, the Chair founded on Peter. Outside her fold is to be found neither the true faith nor eternal salvation...” (“*Singulari Quidem*”).

“It is a sin to believe there is salvation outside the Catholic Church!” (*Our Glorious Popes, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*).

Pope Pius X (AD 1903-1914): “Where is the road which leads us to Jesus Christ? It is the Church. It is our duty to recall to everyone, great

and small, the absolute necessity we are under to have recourse to this Church in order to work out our eternal salvation” (“Supremi Apostolatus”).

Pope Benedict XV (AD 1914-1922): “O glorious St. Peter, obtain for us a sincere loyalty to our Holy Mother the Church; grant that we may ever remain most closely and sincerely united to the Roman Pontiff who is the heir of thy faith and authority: the one, true, visible head of the Catholic Church, that mystical Ark outside which there is no salvation” (*Apostolic Digest*, Michael Malone, Book 2: “The Book of Salvation”).

Pope Pius XI (AD 1922-1939): “If any man does not enter the Church, or if any man departs from it, he is far from the hope of life and salvation” (“Mortalium Animos”).

These statements are impossible to misunderstand. The universal church has taught for nearly 2,000 years that the true Church and Body of Christ is solely composed of those within *their church*. This knowledge has been passed down from pope to pope. While this church teaches doctrines that are almost entirely based on the traditions of men, their understanding that Christ leads one undivided, organized spiritual Body, identified in a single church, is largely correct. Their error is connecting this central truth to *themselves* instead of to the Church of God, led by the *true* Jesus Christ. In similar fashion, they rightly teach that salvation comes through Christ—but then unaware apply this to the false “another Jesus” of which Paul warned (II Cor. 11:4).

Maintaining Doctrine

Now ask: How is it the Catholics have no trouble maintaining this belief for 2,000 years when God’s people cannot retain teachings made so clear just decades ago? Catholics understand that there is one true Church. God’s people have become confused about knowledge the CATHOLICS *still have!* On this matter it could be said of Rome that, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Luke 16:8). I repeat: How weak and vacillating are so many ex-WCG ministers today that they lack even the strength of the Catholics?

This is the one doctrine that the counterfeit church made sure to maintain, because it is in its interest to do so. Even Satan—the devil!—makes certain his kingdom remains together: “[Jesus] said unto them, Every king-

dom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; *how shall then his kingdom stand?*” (Matt. 12:25-26).

As God’s people understood for decades would happen, and right on time prophetically, Rome is now calling more forcefully for its wayward protesting “daughters” to come home, and is quietly enacting policies in the background to expedite the journey.

But for 15 centuries there were no Protestants. When they appeared they faced obstacles most do not consider.

THE PROTESTANT VIEW

We now examine what the Protestants teach. It reveals how the false teaching about the Body of Christ developed.

The Reformers rejected the Catholic teaching when they broke from Rome and formed other churches. They needed a replacement—a *substitute* teaching to justify their actions, enabling them to gain members who could still consider themselves on track toward salvation. What *exactly* do the Protestants teach about Christ’s Church and Body? Some history is necessary to understand *why* the supposed Christian world has felt it acceptable to have so many disagreeing and competing churches.

Let’s tie together several critical elements that clarify the thinking of the Protestant Reformers. When they rebelled against Rome, they were no longer part of that church, and thus had departed from what they previously believed to have been the sole Body of Christ. They knew that Paul taught, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*” (I Cor. 12:13).

The entire world of Christendom can read this passage, and others, about the Body of Christ. These verses had to be “reconciled” with the fact that different groups—starting with individual reformers—were leaving the Roman church and its authority. Here was their problem: With the passing of time, it became obvious they had to come up with—invent—a teaching compatible with converts and believers supposedly being truly baptized, but now into a divided, competing and multiplying

array of denominations that is the Protestant world. They had to reconcile the idea of “*one* Body of Christ” with the reality of *hundreds* of Protestant denominations—and other smaller groups—with more appearing all the time. They were *forced* to conclude that Christ’s Body is composed of *many* organizations, denominations, “fellowships” and “communities of believers”—or stated more correctly, of worthy individuals *within* and *throughout* this host of differing churches.

Protestant “Body of Christ”

Theologians, religionists, ministers and churchmen have summarized the collective mass of believers that come from every shape, flavor, color, size, stripe and texture of this world’s Christianity through use of the simple term “the church.” You are about to see this. Nobody believes or speaks as though one particular group is right. They all talk about their “fellowship” or their particular “community of believers,” or that they are “*part* of the Body of Christ.” You will also see this. The term “the church” carries an accepted, broad meaning to those who use it.

If your pre-calling background is Protestant, you probably recall such soothing, inclusive phrases as “There are many routes to heaven,” and “There are many spokes on the wheel to salvation.” We will see that ALL Protestants believe the New Testament Church consists of people in *many* groups holding different beliefs.

Now come a series of official statements from large Protestant denominations (generally my emphasis throughout). Many quotes are included to demonstrate the profound contrast from Rome in belief. Read them all. Some later ones will shock you.

First the Lutherans:

“The Christian church is made up of those who have been baptized and thus have received Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Sometimes it is referred to as ‘the Body of Christ.’ Lutherans believe that they are *a part of a community* of faith that began with the gift of the Holy Spirit, God’s presence with his people, on the day of Pentecost. The church, regardless of the external form it takes, is the fellowship of those who have been restored to God by Christ. Indeed, to be called into fellowship with Christ is also to be called into *community with other believers...Most Lutherans recognize a wider fellowship of churches* and are eager to work alongside them in ecumenical ministries and projects” (*Essential Questions*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Next are the United Methodists:

“The sacramental act whereby a person is cleansed by the Holy Spirit and becomes part of *the body of Christ—the church universal*” (*Sharing God’s Gifts*, Glossary of United Methodist Terms).

“The *branches* of Christ’s church have developed *diverse traditions* that enlarge our store of *shared understandings*. Our avowed ecumenical commitment as United Methodists is to gather our own *doctrinal emphases* into the *larger Christian unity*, there to be made more meaningful in a *richer whole*” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2004).

Now the Presbyterian Church (in the United States):

“THIS IS THE VISION WE AFFIRM: The Church is one. Christ prayed for his disciples and also for those ‘who will believe’ in years to come, ‘that they may all be one.’ John 17:20, 21...Scripture teaches us that ‘...in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...’ I Corinthians 12:13...‘There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God...’ Ephesians 4:4a, 5a, 6a...Our confessional heritage teaches that ‘...there is only one Church...We, therefore, call this Church catholic because it is universal, scattered through all parts of the world, and extended unto all parts of the world, and extended unto all times, and is *not limited to any times or places*’ ...‘*Obedience to Jesus Christ alone identifies the one universal church...*’” (“Vision Statement on the Unity of the Church,” 1993).

“The Church is a *fellowship* of believers which *seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith to include all people* and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian *community* for itself alone...”

“Visible oneness, by which a *diversity of persons, gifts, and understanding* is brought together, is an important sign of the unity of God’s people...The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirm[ing] its historical continuity *with the whole Church* of Jesus Christ, is committed” (*Book of Order*).

“We are called to be *part of* a global and ecumenical *community*. Our world is wider and more diverse than that which our Reformed forbears knew. We live in a multilingual, multiracial, multicultural, and economically diverse world...”

“We are *one part of* the body of Christ: a *community* of mutual interdependence in which *diversity contributes to wholeness*” (Life and Mission Statement, 197th General Assembly).

“1. The...Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

“2. The visible Church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion” (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 25, “Of the Church”).

“As *one part of* the body of Christ, we actively engage in mutual sharing with *other parts* in order to ‘bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.’ Galatians 6:2...”

“[A]s there is one head of all the faithful, so all *ought to* unite in one body, so that there may be one Church spread throughout the whole earth, and not a number of churches” (John Calvin, *In Calvin: Theological Treatises*, J.K.S. Reid).

In this last quote, John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church, decries the division of the Christian world that he knows is not biblical—is not what God intended. Yet he is willing to describe Christ’s Body as divided because of what *men* have done. How interesting that the splinter leaders take the *exact same position*, also merely *bemoaning* what they should in fact REJECT as an incorrect view of the Body of Christ. Yet they cannot connect this similarity to how the *same spirit* was/is guiding both—Calvin and themselves.

The Seventh-day Adventists teach this:

“The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ...” (www.adventist.org).

Now the Southern Baptists:

“A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is *a* local body of baptized believers who are *associated* by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel...and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth...This church is an autonomous body...The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages...”

“Christ’s people should...organize such *associations* and *conventions* as may best secure *cooperation* for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations *have no authority over one another* or over the *churches*...*Cooperation is desirable* between the *various Christian denominations*” (*The Baptist Faith and Message*, Southern Baptist Convention).

“I also believe that there is a body of Christ that includes *all believers* in the age of grace. This body is a spiritual organism which as the prospective heavenly church *has never met for its first service*, but I do see it as an existing body today. However, it is *more of a spiritual blessing than an operational unit*. Its members are spread over all the earth and in heaven. *It is incomplete and finds its final form in the future*” (“The Bride of Christ,” David Reagan, Antioch Baptist Church).

Shocking Description!

And now perhaps the most revealing statement. It comes by means of an interview with Billy Graham, one of the most famous modern preachers—a Baptist—conducted by “televangelist” Robert Schuller. This extreme version of Protestant theology shows that there are ultimately no bounds—no ability to draw limits—on the Body of Christ once one rejects the true Church doctrine. You will need to read this quote twice to believe it:

Dr. Schuller: “Tell me, what is the future of Christianity?”

Dr. Graham: “Well, Christianity and being a true believer, you know, I think there’s the body of Christ which comes from *all the Christian groups around the world, or outside the Christian groups*. I think that *everybody that loves Christ or knows Christ, whether they’re conscious of it or not, they’re members of the body of Christ*. And I don’t think that we’re going to see a great sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time.

“What *God is* doing today is *calling people* out of the world for His name. Whether they come from the *Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world*, they are *members of the body of Christ* because they’ve been called by God. *They may not even know the name of Jesus*, but they know in their hearts they need something that they don’t have and they turn to the only light they have and I think they’re saved and they’re going to be with us in heaven.”

Dr. Schuller: “What I hear you saying is that it’s possible for Jesus Christ to come into a human heart and soul and life even if they’ve been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you’re saying?”

Dr. Graham: “Yes it is because I believe that. I’ve met people in various parts of the world in tribal situations that *they have never seen a Bible or heard about a Bible, have never heard of Jesus* but they’ve believed in their hearts that there is a God and they tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived.”

Dr. Schuller: “This is fantastic. *I’m so thrilled to hear you say that. There’s a wideness in God’s mercy.*”

Dr. Graham: “There is. There definitely is” (*Hour Of Power*, “Say ‘Yes’ To Possibility Thinking,” May 31, 1997).

Astonishing ignorance and blindness—and plain rejection of Scripture! This most famous evangelist in the world and probably in history believes that Buddhists, Muslims and *non-believers* can all be part of the Body of Christ. How good of him to include “Christians.” His statement more than any other demonstrates the extreme danger of departing from the Bible on what is the true Church.

Why cannot the splinter leaders connect where the *spirit* that is guiding such men can eventually take THEM? And why cannot they see this *same spirit* at work in their *own thinking*, except that it is earlier in its development within their minds? The answer is that the Laodicean world is more than anything else characterized by BLINDNESS (Rev. 3:17)!

More from the Protestants

An influential 20th century British preacher, as well as another influential writer, aptly demonstrate how the popular collective term “the church” is used to represent “believers” wherever they “fellowship”:

“The glory of the gospel is that when *the Church* is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first. That is how revival comes” (*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

“[This book] is a call for *the church* to become aware of how far we have drifted. The time has come to wake up and renew our passion for what Jesus is building...”

“Jesus is building *the church*—authentic believers in Him—to share His Word and to engage in good works...” (*The Church Awakening – An Urgent Call For Renewal*, Charles R. Swindoll).

Next, a Protestant Christian ministry group called *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry* wrote the following in an article titled “Unity in the body”:

“One of the biggest problems in the body of Christ is *disunity*. Christianity has been *fragmented* and *splintered* into so many groups and

denominations that our effectiveness is largely diminished...I am constantly encountering Calvinists who attack non Calvinists. I find Baptists who attack Presbyterians, non-tongue speakers who attack those who speak in tongues (and vice versa)...etc. The whole thing is ridiculous. Sure, we can have differences of opinion and we need to because we are thinkers and we have opinions. But our differences need to be couched in humility and love.”

What a perfect parallel to the WCG splinters today—and decried by the author in the same way so many in the splinters decry their plight. But there *is* a difference in options faced. A splinter member could return to the one Church where Christ is still working. The author’s only alternative for “unity” now would be the Catholic church.

Finally, here is an email that is similar to many we receive. It reveals how effectively Protestant preachers have conditioned professing Christians to accept their teaching. The writer had come to our website and had only barely begun reading something about the true Church, before abruptly stopping and spitting back at us what she had come to believe, probably from childhood (emphasis is the author’s):

“The REAL church is Christ’s Church. It is the body of real believers, regardless of their earthly identification. It’s a spiritual body and only He knows who the real membership is, but any manmade, humanly organized denomination, no matter how fine it may be, is NOT the true church of Christ. Many of its members may be in Christ, and affiliated with the body of Christ, but no earthly organization can say: We are the one, true Church. GOD IS NOT LIMITED TO ANY PARTICULAR HUMAN ORGANIZATION.”

Obvious Counterfeit

The idea that Christ’s Church—His Body—is split up—divided—among many organizations is pure 100 percent *Protestant theology*, born in the minds of the Reformers who rejected the idea that the Catholics constitute the only true Church.

The Protestant view is completely contrary to what Mr. Armstrong taught—and to what the Bible teaches—about the true Church and Body of Christ. You are about to see that the Protestant teaching is exactly what these “harlot” daughters (Rev. 17:5) taught to the WCG apostates—who in turn taught the Protestant “Jesus” and his counterfeit “body” to the splinter leaders before they fled the apostasy.

Here is what you must recognize: The Protestant world believes in a *different* (counterfeit) “body” of a *different* (counterfeit) “Christ,” emanating from an entirely *different* (counterfeit) SPIRIT—not the Spirit of God. All of these churches are led by the “spirit of error” (I John 4:6) and the “spirit of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2)—sent from the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4)!

The Protestants threw the baby out with the bathwater. Rather than rejecting the *Roman Catholic Church* as the one place where Jesus Christ is working—and then looking for the Church that fit the biblical description of the one He founded—they rejected the very idea that there is ONLY ONE PLACE where Christ is Head. Burned by the WCG apostates, but conditioned by them to accept the false understanding of what is the Church, the splinter leaders came to the same conclusion as the Protestants—exactly the same. This will become most evident.

But you are not quite ready to hear what your leaders fell into. First you must understand how PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT from the Protestants is the teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong! As with showing both the departure and contrast from Catholic thinking in the Protestant world, we will demonstrate what is seen to be a perfect parallel that occurred in the splinters. Just as *many disagreeing Protestant leaders* left what they had previously believed was the one true church (the Catholic church) to form *multiple organizations*, and were forced to create a wider definition of Christ’s Body, in an identical action, *many disagreeing splinter leaders* left what they had previously believed was the one true Church (the Worldwide Church of God) to form *multiple organizations*. It became no less necessary for these modern leaders to create a wider definition of the Body of Christ. Unable to agree on various true doctrines, the latter could no longer walk together any more than could the disagreeing Protestants. Also like the Protestants, they wanted to show “love” toward others of different belief by appearing to be “inclusive.” Besides, this approach was much, much easier. It required no courage of conviction, no willingness to stand alone on the truth of this teaching as did Mr. Armstrong. Just show love and be inclusive—and label anyone who supports Mr. Armstrong as “authoritarian” or “dictatorial.”

You will see Mr. Armstrong was not afraid of such labels.

WHAT HERBERT ARMSTRONG TAUGHT

What did Mr. Armstrong teach? The once-so-clear answer is no longer clear. As with demonstrating the clarity of Catholic teaching, it becomes similarly necessary to establish both what Mr. Armstrong taught about the one true Church and Body of Christ—and that the splinter leaders rejected it. As you read his words, it becomes evident some leaders did this with full knowledge of what they were doing. Others were happily deceived.

The first two quotes make plain that the Church and Body of Christ *cannot* be comprised of various groups, or even two groups, never mind many, plus scattered individuals. They set up and provide the foundation for all that we will read from Mr. Armstrong. The large number of statements from him are included for several purposes. (1) They remove all doubt of what he thought. (2) They span decades of Mr. Armstrong’s thinking, demonstrating he never changed position. (3) They reveal that he always carefully (and forcefully) attached his belief to plain statements of the Bible, unlike the Catholics. (4) The sheer weight of the quotes *forces* you to recognize that your leaders have deceived you when they say, “Mr. Armstrong believed what we teach.” (5) They permit the inclusion of his teaching on some of the subjects related to the true Church, listed in Chapter One.

The first quote shows how Mr. Armstrong would answer those who are confused—the *overall* greatest purpose of this book. The second quote asks you to “stop and think.” In one sense, this is the *first* goal of

this book. Finally, if you will permit him, Mr. Armstrong carefully answers many of the most often asked questions that are probably on your mind since you are reading the book. Look for his answers—which will be lost if you read too fast. Together, these answers will go a long way in telling you *how to find* Christ’s Church. (**My occasional comments are in bold.** All other emphasis is Mr. Armstrong’s.)

“Today some in the Church of God do not UNDERSTAND just what the Church of God really IS! Some have become confused as to whether there is ORGANIZATION or government in it—and I mean in GOD’S OWN CHURCH! And God HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH! (I Cor. 12:12, 13)...”

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

Brethren Letter, May 2, 1974

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

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

“Stop and THINK!

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

“Jesus said, ‘He that is not *with me* [and since He is the Head of God’s one and only Church, He plainly meant with Him where HE is working—in God’s one Church] is against me; and he that gathers not *with me* scatters abroad’ (Matthew 12:30). [**A sobering warning to your leaders, and you.**]

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

“...The one who tries to GET his salvation apart from the one Church Christ is going to marry is on the ‘GET’ way. Those loyally in the Church are GIVING of their prayers, loyalty, encouragement and support...in GIVING the GOOD NEWS to the world—its ONLY HOPE!”

“7 Proofs of God’s True Church,” *The Plain Truth, September 1979*

“In an effort to mislead and draw away God’s people *and tithes*, the misleading idea is now being circulated that this MAN (not Church) also preaches the Gospel. So, why not *divide your tithe, sending half to the man and half to God’s CHURCH*—or else send it alternately to each.”

“1) The tithe is GOD’S tithe, *not yours*, and is to be sent to GOD’S CHURCH, where Christ, alive and well, is actively working, directing and blessing.

“2) God has only ONE Church, and that Church has a few hundred local congregations worldwide, all a PART—and an integral *working* part—of the ONE spiritual organism, the Worldwide Church of God... Jesus Christ does not HEAD, guide and work in any competing man *or* church. Christ IS NOT DIVIDED! Christ’s Body is led on earth, UNDER HIM, by His chosen apostle whom HE appointed and used in BUILDING His Church in our time. God’s TRUE Church is performing the FUNCTION of the Church—carrying Christ’s Gospel message to *all the world*.

“3) The *man* who wants half of God’s tithe *does not speak the same thing*...No, brethren, he does NOT preach the same Gospel. He was attempting to water down God’s true doctrines and oppose its doctrines and its apostle and to become the *self*-appointed head of God’s Church.

“That’s why he was DISFELLOWSHIPED from God’s Church. He WAS NOT speaking the same thing. GOD’S CHURCH cannot speak with an UNCERTAIN SOUND!

“4) This man is NOT a Church of God. A man can incorporate himself, under man’s law, using the NAME of a Church—and he came *as close* to the name ‘Worldwide Church of God’ as possible, TO DECEIVE and mislead brethren into thinking he is THE SAME CHURCH. Any ‘Tom,’ ‘Dick’ or ‘Harry’ can incorporate himself, with the signatures of a couple other men as ‘directors’ in the name of a church. BUT THAT DOES NOT make him a church!”

“...stating clearly which is GOD’S Church. It is:

“1) Where God’s TRUTH is. Not with one disfellowshipped for trying to water down that TRUTH.

“2) Where God’s true Work is going out to the WHOLE WORLD.

“3) Where Christ’s chosen apostle is.

“God’s tithe is to be PAID to GOD’S Church, where CHRIST is working. Jesus Christ does not work in two ‘churches,’ one competing against and trying to draw members from the other. Christ is NOT DIVIDED!

“God does not have two churches—only the ONE Church that Jesus Christ founded in A.D. 31...”

“*Christ Is the Living Head of Only One Church—Not Two,*”
Good News, December 18, 1978

“God *started* His Gospel WORK—proclaiming the Gospel (good news) of HIS KINGDOM—through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after His resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, and thereafter, to enter into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those constituting GOD’S CHURCH.

“The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God’s Spirit, to carry on GOD’S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!”

“But WHAT is the divine MISSION of that Church? What is its PURPOSE? The answer is to *do* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus started and now continues *through* His Church.”

“Wherever God’s true Church is—the ONE Church that is CHRIST’S—it will be preaching THAT GOSPEL to the whole world—over *all continents*—today. For we are *near* the END! That is the Gospel of the *living* Christ! It is the GOOD NEWS of the *coming* KINGDOM OF GOD to *RULE THE WORLD!*”

“But wherever that ONE *true* Church is, it will be named *the Church of God.*”

“But that is not all. Many have appropriated God’s name, but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD...”

“That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as King of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth...”

“There is only ONE such Church!

“It is doing THE WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a ‘little flock,’ persecuted, despised by the world.”

“Personal,” Good News, August 1983

“Some have left God’s Church saying, ‘I have not left Christ—I’ve only left that organization. I worship Christ in my own way.’”

“Will these ‘loner’ individual ‘Christians,’ or these many little isolated ‘GROUPS’ constitute part of the wife made ready?”

“The very eternal LIFE AND DEATH QUESTION right now [**notice how seriously Mr. Armstrong took this**] is: ‘Just WHAT is the wife that has made herself ready? Is it one united, organized, compacted, Spiritual organism—all speaking the same thing—all joined to the one Vine and bearing fruit—all in the organized Church built upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone, having grown into a BUILDING—a Holy TEMPLE, in the Lord, fitly FRAMED TOGETHER and *compacted* in that which every joint supplieth? OR, will it be a conglomeration of disunited ‘GROUPS’ and denominations and a

number of isolated individual ‘christians,’ who have followed Christ in their own way?”

“...Jesus said, ‘He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not *with me* scattereth abroad’ (Matthew 12:30).

“Again, ‘He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth’ (Luke 11:23). Those not WITH Christ, *WHERE HE LEADS* IN HIS CHURCH, are scattering and against Him. [**Another sobering warning to your leaders, and you.**]

“But consider FURTHER.

“Jesus Christ is going to marry GOD’S CHURCH—called THE BODY OF CHRIST. Now is that Body united, organized on a united and firm FOUNDATION, or an assortment of ‘loner’ individuals and various ‘groups’?”

“The only PURPOSE of the Church is to CARRY ON THE WORK WHICH CHRIST STARTED! It is now the BODY in which the Holy Spirit is working. And God set in the Church, to ORGANIZE it, apostles, prophets, pastors...”

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

“Separated ‘Christians,’ or ‘groups’ are branches *broken off* from the VINE—the BODY OF CHRIST! [**So crucial to understand. But such individual branches can be grafted back in upon repentance.**]

“The Father is the Husbandman—the Vinedresser. Every branch of this grapevine (the Church) that does not bear fruit for the Kingdom, the Father prunes it—cuts it off—that the organized, united vine may bear MORE FRUIT.”

*“Is God’s Church Composed of Many Separate ‘Groups’?”,
Good News, Dec. 18, 1978*

“Little groups, splintering off...They are not pleasing God or being blessed by Him. Jesus said, ‘By their fruits you shall know them.’ They usually claim to be ‘branches’ of the Church of God. But Jesus said, ‘I will build my Church,’ (Matt. 16:18). He did not say denominations, sects, cults, *branches* or a church divided against itself. Rather He said a house divided against itself cannot stand. There is one true Church and one only. The apostle Paul pictured *humanly self-appointed* ‘branches’ when he said to the *elders* of the local church at Ephesus that some of their own selves would *depart to draw a following after themselves*. [**See this additional “branches” connection.**]

“Paul said, ‘But now are they many members, yet one body’ (I Corinthians 12:20). How was that one body organized? Did it have one government? ‘And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers...’ (verse 28). Verse 25 shows there should be no divisions in the body—*no branches or branch organizations.*”

“The Church is ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy Temple in the Lord’ (Ephesians 2:20-21). Note, the Church is organized and fitly framed together, *not* organized with *competing and differing branches.*” **[Get this.]**

“Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God,” Worldwide News, June 24, 1985

Let’s now understand that Mr. Armstrong taught the true Church and Christ’s Body are also an *organization*, while at the same time teaching that both are a *spiritual organism*. This distinction has long confused many brethren:

“...the one and only true CHURCH is NOT an ORGANIZATION OF MEN, but a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM. Yet that fact does not preclude organization.”

“This spiritual organism is the ‘Body of Christ’ existing for the PURPOSE of carrying on THE WORK OF GOD.”

“If every individual in it goes out alone, independently, trying to carry out the divine Commission in whatever way he sees fit, we shall have confusion, a house divided against itself.”

“Christ has, indeed, ORGANIZED HIS CHURCH, SO FITLY joined together as a physical building put together with the precision of every part of the most expert craftsmen.”

“Just What Is the Church?”, Article, 1970

“The living Jesus Christ founded the one true Church of God, A.D. 31. The same living Jesus Christ started the Philadelphia era of God’s Church through me, as His chosen apostle, August 1933.

“God commands in His Word that we all ‘SPEAK THE SAME THING.’ That ‘same thing’ He put into His Church through His apostle.”

*“Watering Down—Or Slowly Building Solidly Up?”,
Worldwide News, June 11, 1979*

Mr. Armstrong’s words are *impossible to misunderstand*—and utterly different in every regard from what your leaders are telling you—and

from what they are practicing. Speaking the same thing keeps the Church together. Many wonder why the various leaders cannot “get together.” The answer is: They no longer agree on doctrine—either with Mr. Armstrong or each other. The next statement from Mr. Armstrong is almost prophetic. Describing a dream he had, it is as though he wrote directly to the splinters, particularly to the United Church of God, which recently cloned itself through its split.

This quote, addressing the liberals of the mid-1970s, carries a powerful message to every member and minister in the splinters of honest thinking:

“I awakened considerably impressed with the dream. Was God revealing to me that TOO MANY within the Church membership are *leaving GOD out of the picture?*—in their own minds putting *GOD* out of the Church? Do they think that the kind of men *the people* would vote for ought to be made the LEADERS in the Church?—that *the people* should say to GOD, ‘This is OUR Church, God, we want you to GET OUT of the Church and leave us alone. WE will run this Church OUR way!’ I awakened impressed that TOO MANY of our people are LEAVING GOD AND CHRIST OUT OF HIS CHURCH, and trying to make it OUR Church—*the church of the PEOPLE*, and NOT the CHURCH of GOD!...”

“[In the 70s] there were at least six or seven in TOP offices next to Christ’s apostle in authority—men trusted and honored. But they were going to make it ‘THE CHURCH OF PEOPLE,’ instead of the CHURCH OF GOD. They could not see God nor Christ in their mental picture of God’s Church. They were LIBERALS!...”

“Now churches or works of THEIR OWN have been started. But they overlook one thing: ‘EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE, THEY LABOUR IN VAIN THAT BUILD IT.’”

“GOD is not building their houses!”

“*Shall We All Leave the Church of God and Join ‘The Church of People’?*”, *Good News*, Sept. 1980

“Brethren, do we not find ourselves taking for granted that the churches in what is called ‘Christianity’ are also God’s churches—that WE are just *another* of the many denominations, the only difference being that we hold to some different doctrines?” [The classic Protestant view so many have accepted in the splinters, but in their case applied to a “Churches of God only” setting.]

“*That is simply not true!* We in GOD’S Church are *not* just one of all these churches.”

“I have mentioned how the early Church GREW and MULTIPLIED in those God added to the Church. But soon the persecution came. Soon the false preachers came, with the *different* gospel—a *different* spirit. They came fomenting a spirit of criticism—of DOUBT! They came saying Jesus’ true apostles were preaching WRONG doctrines.” **[Carefully reread this paragraph with the true Church teaching in mind.]**

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

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

“The New Testament Church of God received all its teachings, practices, customs, FROM THE APOSTLES, with Peter chief over all the others.

“Yet the apostles were the teachers, who instilled in the Church the BELIEFS, TEACHINGS, PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS of the Church. And all members of the Church were required by God to BELIEVE and SPEAK THE SAME THING! **[Did you get this?—and notice the word “required.”]**

“THERE WAS NO DOCTRINAL BOARD! The teachings of the Church did not come from a COUNCIL of ministers and/or lay members, who voted on what to believe. **[All in UCG and COGwa—plus others—should remember this.]**

“Right here, MARK WELL THIS POINT: GOD PUT HIS TRUTH INTO HIS CHURCH THROUGH CHRIST AND THROUGH THE APOSTLES!”

“NOTE THIS! The Church of God is built on the FOUNDATION of the apostles and the prophets...”

“...I have shown you...that Peter was LEADER of the apostles—and that the Church received its teachings and doctrines FROM THE APOSTLES!”

“So now let it be MADE OFFICIAL—by Christ’s present-day apostle—that this binding and loosing PLAINLY, CLEARLY was given to Christ’s chief APOSTLE—not to lower-rank ministers ordained by his authority—not by the CHURCH as a body—but by the APOSTLE!”

“JESUS CHRIST is the living HEAD of this Church! HE built it through His apostle. And He, CHRIST, still rules SUPREME in the one and only area on earth where the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is being administered today!”

[Reread the last two paragraphs until your ears ring.]

“*How Christ Gives the Church Its Beliefs*”,
Good News, Nov. 20, 1978

Mr. Armstrong said time and again that the living Christ has always led only ONE organization—ONE Church. His statements are plain—and he never wavered. (Many more will come later in a different context.) There is only one organized, unified Church, synonymous with the Body

of Christ, teaching the truth, doing the Work, led by the apostle, all under Christ's lead—there is no such thing as a church being *part* of some “greater” Body of Christ. An organization either constitutes all that is that Church and Body—or it is *entirely* outside it. Over 150,000 WCG brethren and ministers once knew what you just reviewed. What happened? Did they *forget* it?—*reject* it?—never fully *understand* it?—secretly *never believe* it?—or did they believe it without proving it, leaving them vulnerable—unable to resist seductive arguments against it?

With all of the above framework in mind, consider a final quote. Its powerful message is an amazing parallel to today (emphasis mine):

“Even in Paul’s day many among those attending at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places began to apostatize and to turn away from the truth. Divisions sprang up [**Notice Mr. Armstrong understood that the *first century apostasy* produced numerous groups, holding to a variety of different wrong ideas mixed with truth.**] and those individuals unconverted or turned from God’s truth and way of life were no part of God’s true Church though visibly assembling with those who were. The mystery of iniquity was already working as the Apostle Paul wrote in II Thessalonians, the 2nd chapter, and it was working inside of the *visible churches*. This apostasy increased and by the year of 125 A.D. *the majority* in most churches now, the majority assembling for services in most churches were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, though professing to be Christians! *And, incidentally, they still assembled on the Sabbath day*—believe it or not—that’s the day we call Saturday...Now, gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the *visible churches* going by the name Christian remained truly yielded to God and to His truth and lead by His Spirit. And after Emperor Constantine took virtual control of the *visible professing church, in the early 4th century, the visible organization became almost wholly pagan and they began excommunicating and persecuting all who held to the true Word of God—the Bible!* And finally it became necessary for all real Christians, even as a scattered people, it became necessary for them to flee. And they, the ones that were led by the Spirit of God, the ones in whom Jesus Christ was living His life in them, they alone composed the true Church and they had to flee the jurisdiction of the government in order to truly worship God. That’s what’s happened my friends, to the Church, but **GOD STILL HAS HIS MINISTERS. GOD STILL HAS HIS CHURCH.** I want to tell you that God’s truth is still written in the pages of your Bible if you’ll blow the dust off of it and look at it as it is.”

Broadcast quoting The Plain Truth About Easter booklet

Will you disregard Mr. Armstrong’s plain words? Will you forget the *clarity* of what he said because *your leaders* tell you his death—or the apostasy—or an inability to agree on doctrine—changed the Church and Body of Christ? The Bible declares, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8), and the God of the Old Testament, Christ, says, “I change not” (Mal. 3:6).

Those who alter truths taught by Mr. Armstrong cannot see they attack *Jesus Christ* for “getting it wrong” through Mr. Armstrong. Some almost seem to believe He selected a man too stupid to understand perhaps the biggest truth in the New Testament—or, worse, that *Jesus Himself* was too incompetent to guide His apostle!

A seed must now be planted. Periodically ask yourself as you continue: Did the false WCG leaders whom you rejected, and the Protestants who taught them, somehow better understand what constitutes the Church of God than did Christ’s apostle?

THE WCG APOSTATES

To see more clearly *how* the false teaching about the Church and Body of Christ rolled over into the splinters, we must first examine how thoroughly the apostate leadership of the Worldwide Church of God in the late 1980s and early 1990s absorbed the Protestants' beliefs, rejecting Mr. Armstrong's teachings.

The tone and thinking could not be more radically different from Mr. Armstrong. The first quote below reveals how these men *deliberately* twisted and blurred Mr. Armstrong's teaching into outright Protestant theology. (Recall the Protestant quotes as you read.) Will the soothing words of a false apostle, and others with him, sound reasonable to you? They did to many thousands (including splinter ministers) who swallowed their deceit hook, line and sinker. Notice the dates of the quotes and realize that most ministers in the splinters (including those in UCG and COGwa) were still present in the WCG. Why were they not warning you of the dangerous *influence* upon you? There are two possibilities: (1) cowardice, or (2) they bought in. Consider asking them which of the two applies (emphasis mine throughout):

"As you know, in my speaking and writing I have often commented that we cannot limit where and with whom God works when it comes to other Christian churches."

"...the true Church of God is *not limited* to any corporate entity nor any human organization."

“The true Church of God consists of converted people, all people who have the Holy Spirit. That is a point Mr. Armstrong frequently stressed. As he explained, it is not...the incorporated organization that constitutes the Church of God. It is the people in whom God dwells by his Spirit that makes up the Church, the Body of Christ.”

“Therefore, we should understand that we do not form all there is of the true Church of God.”

“God has called us to lead people to him, not to ourselves.”

“We preach the gospel so people will come to Christ, not so they will come to us.”

“God works where he pleases, and *all converted people everywhere make up the true Church of God.*”

“It is *not* correct to say that any particular church organization, including *ours*, is, of and by itself, the true Church.”

Joseph W. Tkach, Letter to Ministry, PGR, April 26, 1994

“People who decide to leave the Church because they have not come to understand changes in the doctrine should not be treated as enemies.”

“If they choose to go someplace where they can be with people who believe as they do on their points of difference, that is up to them, and that does not make them our enemies.”

“*Mr. Armstrong set the example* in that way decades ago when he continued to have a friendly relationship with the Church of God (Seventh Day). **[Mr. Armstrong ceased this in 1939.]**

“There were instances when our members even attended congregations of that church when there was not one of our congregations available.” **[Mr. Armstrong stopped this in 1952.]**

“If their motivation is selfish, that is, if they are seeking status and recognition, *regardless of where they decide to attend* they will still have to deal with that selfishness before they can have a positive relationship with God – before *their increased level of service will be meaningful.*”

*“Personal from Joseph W. Tkach,” Worldwide News,
November 17, 1992*

Here is a quote from the early date of December 1991, revealing for what Pasadena’s thinking was early on more than for what brethren would have yet been aware of:

Interviewer: “That sounds very, very noble and everything, but [Herbert Armstrong] had a sense of divine call...I had the understanding

that he understood the WCG...as a special organization in an exclusive way..."

Snyder: "Well, he certainly wrote along those lines. But I would say that *the current position* of the Church is that *we are not an exclusive body by any means...*"

*Interview with Michael Snyder, WMUZ radio,
Detroit, Michigan, December 17, 1991*

"Another thing that I'm being accused of, that I no longer believe this is the true Church of God. I believe it with all my heart. You are my witnesses. And I'll add another factor in, too. We cannot limit where God chooses to work."

*Joseph W. Tkach, "A Point of Light,"
June 12, 1993 sermon, played in all churches*

"There is no question that we are God's true Church. The point I have made is that we are not all there is to God's true Church. *There is a monumental difference in those two statements.*" **[Even Joseph Tkach understood the "monumental difference" between Mr. Armstrong's view and his own.]**

"There is only one Church of God, not many. That one Church is made up of every person who has the Holy Spirit, regardless of where they are, when they lived, or *what organization they belong to.*"

Joseph W. Tkach, letter to WCG field minister, Spring 1994

"The Bible...does not support any believer's attempts to become exclusive (Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14)."

*Joseph Tkach Jr., "Church Administration,"
PGR, January 11, 1994*

The next quote was written by one of the leaders of the COGwa group. He agreed with Mr. Tkach and his son, and did so for at least one and a half more years until entering UCG at its inception (note the date of his writing). Also note that all the ministers of UCG and the brethren who joined them were hearing the drumbeat of such regular statements from as early as 1992, years before they departed. Does the reader think it an accident—or perfectly logical to believe—that these and so many other people were slowly *conditioned* into accepting what you will see momentarily that they ALL echo today? (Also note this man's acceptance of the false born again—"born from above"—doctrine taught to him before he left. This samples the greater problem at work in the splinters.):

“I believe that Mr. Hulme stated in the letter you enclosed, that any person who has the Holy Spirit is a child of God and therefore part of the Body of Christ, including all converted persons *in all denominations*, and that the membership of the Worldwide Church of God does not comprise the entirety of the Body of Christ. On the other side of the coin, I believe there are people in the Worldwide Church of God, as well as in all other denominations, who are not, ‘born from above’ as evidenced by their obvious lack of commitment to Jesus Christ.”

David Register, WCG Pastor, Letter to The Watchman’s Expositor, Nov. 12, 1993

“We believe that the Church (the spiritual Body of Christ) includes all persons who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, regardless of what denomination they may *fellowship with* currently.”

“Faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes a person a Christian, *not the denomination he fellowships with*. We have always acknowledged that there are truly converted Christians who do not recognize the Sabbath.”

David G. Hunsberger, WCG PCD, March 1, 1994

“The point is, *God is bringing his people to Jesus Christ, not to any particular human organization*. The criterion for salvation is faith in Jesus Christ, not membership in a particular denomination.”

“What makes *any* church a valid church? Faith in...Christ. God does not give us special favor for being different or for being unique. He saved us, *just like everybody else*, by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Joseph W. Tkach, Letter to Member, Feb. 9, 1994

“It is obvious, from the fruits, that some Sunday-keeping Christians have the Holy Spirit.”

Joseph W. Tkach, letter to WCG field minister, Apr. 12, 1994

Note the next author, who is the leader of a larger splinter, and the man whom UCG chose to be its *first* president for three years:

“John wrote: ‘Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well’ (I John 5:1). Accordingly, the Worldwide Church of God does not consider its membership to be all there is to the Body of Christ. Our position is that any person who has the Holy Spirit is a child of God, regardless of the

church he or she belongs to, and we recognize that God works where he pleases. *This is different from the position once held by the Church.*”

David Hulme, Letter to The Watchman Fellowship, June 24, 1993

“...we no longer condemn Christians who have chosen Sunday as their day of gathering together for their services to worship and praise God. Christianity is defined by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer, not necessarily by outward customs or practices in group worship.”

David G. Hunsberger, WCG PCD, Nov. 18, 1994

“How sad that some among us were actually upset and angry to learn that there are true Christians in other churches besides ours. That in itself is an indicator of how far from Christ some of us have become—to the point that some of us actually find it unpleasant to know that God has called others besides us to salvation!”

“Isn’t that selfish, arrogant attitude one that pervades Christian churches? Many churches believe that they and they alone are the truly faithful and obedient fellowship of believers. And just like so many of the others, we have been guilty of the same sin.” **[The condemnation in this paragraph—authored by Joseph Tkach and equating Mr. Armstrong’s position with SIN!—has taken root in the minds of thousands in the splinters who similarly today attack those who agree with Mr. Armstrong about the true Church. May God help the open-minded see WHO taught them this thinking—and what SPIRIT was at work in the false apostle and the others with him spewing it.]**

“There are Christian churches, congregations and Bible societies that are also, just as we are, doing God’s work in this dark world.”

“But as I have explained often, salvation is not in Sabbath and Holy Day keeping; salvation comes only by the generous grace of God and only through faith in Jesus Christ.”

“We should be able to exemplify the kingdom of God by extending the right hand of fellowship to believers who are different from ourselves.”

“But, true to human nature, some of us have allowed these blessings [the Sabbath and Holy Days] to become a snare by becoming arrogant and self-righteous about them...And, I’m sorry to say, it is one of the very things some among us have *chosen not to repent of.*”

“...we must not condemn and reject Christians God has called into *other fellowships* and given *other tasks*. I have explained before that the Sabbath was given as a sign of the special covenant relationship between

God and his people, Israel. But the sign of God's people in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit in them, expressing itself in love..."

"God will work with them as he sees fit."

Joseph W. Tkach, Letter to the Ministry, PGR, Oct. 18, 1994

"Do [we] claim to be the one true Church?"

"The one 'true' Church is the Body of Christ, made up of all believers who are called by God and in whom the Holy Spirit abides. It is not limited to corporate entities or any single church organization. God works where he wills, and it is not the place of any church to limit God's work to itself (Mark 9:38-40)."

We're Often Asked, 1994

"Africa not only has some of the world's poorest countries, it also has some of the most Christian ones. An estimated 327 million Christians live in Africa..."

*John Halford, "The Challenge of Africa,"
Plain Truth, Nov.-Dec. 1994*

"How can we say there are many Christians outside the Worldwide Church of God?"

"It might help to imagine yourself holding a 10-meter pole. You take the pole and cut off 1 meter. Now you have two poles. One is 9 meters long, the other 1 meter. Stand them on end beside each other in comparison to each other, which of the poles is little? The 1-meter pole, of course! That 1-meter pole represents 10 percent of the original pole. So 10 percent can be little."

"Therefore, if 10 percent of the world's population were converted, the Church would still be little and the world would still be deceived. With the world's population soon to exceed 6 billion, 10 percent of that figure is 600 million. Yes, 600 million can still be little in a world of 6 billion."

"This figure reminds me of John's vision of an innumerable multitude of converted (Revelation 7:9-10). That multitude is still a little flock living in a deceived world."

"Is 10 percent too big a figure? Then let's choose 1 percent. One percent of 6 billion is 60 million, still a hefty sum."

"...it seems evident from the Scriptures and from logic that Christ's little flock is many times bigger than we thought."

*Ralph Orr, "How Little Is Jesus' Flock?,"
Reviews You Can Use, May-June 1995*

There is not the slightest difference between all these quotes and the Protestants' cited earlier. Those who were in the WCG in the early 1990s may remember that after the closing of Ambassador College's Pasadena campus and consolidation into one large college in Big Sandy, there was an immediate focus by the WCG leadership on pursuing accreditation, and turning Ambassador College into Ambassador *University*.

This seemingly small administrative change—pursuing academic accreditation—had a profound effect on the Church and on the college's administrators. To be more accepted by the mainstream professing Christian world, a related step that the new administrators had taken was to pursue post-secondary education in a variety of *religious* fields at outside institutions.

Source of Indoctrination

The group of men who were the leading architects of all the new doctrines were pursuing degrees from Azusa Pacific University—a school founded by the Methodist and Brethren churches. These would range from Doctorates of Ministry to Masters of Arts in biblical studies. These schools indoctrinated these deceived thinkers with standard Protestant theology. These men chose to be trained by Methodists, and were in fact slowly becoming what could be called Evangelical Methodists. In turn, they injected this thinking into the Worldwide Church of God. We learned that one of these doctrines involved the Church and Body of Christ.

The top ministers had purposefully decided to suckle on the milk of what were the Revelation 17 Great Whore's daughters—and God's Church and ministry in turn did the same with these leaders. If one merely saw *where* they were being "educated," there would be no doubt how far they planned to go. Yet few took note at the time, and even fewer *knew* where the apostates were learning their new doctrines.

The above constant stream of repetitive false statements seemed, over time, to wear out—to "bewitch" and "beat back" (recall Gal. 3:1 and 5:7)—and subsequently *condition* thousands of God's people who, as mentioned, obviously absorbed the apostates' plainly *unbiblical Protestant thinking* on this doctrine before fleeing the WCG. This includes the ministry—and almost certainly you.

The devil did his work well. Think. He even convinced these thousands (through statements we read) that it was *Mr. Armstrong* who taught them what they now believe. Incredible!

Will you see through this? Ask: Do you agree with the apostates? If not, what do *you* believe, and *whom* do you agree with?

None of the WCG leaders' false teachings are more classic—and dangerous!—than the Protestant counterfeit now commonly substituted in the splinters for the Bible teaching about the true Church and Body of Christ.

What the “WCG” Teaches Today

Finally, here is what Grace Communion International (GCI, formerly the WCG) teaches. It naturally concludes this section because it sets up what the splinters teach today. See how much difference you can find between the two. What GCI has written has been refined to reflect complete agreement with the world. Note again how the term “the church” has been reduced to connote “all believers” no matter their affiliation (emphasis mine):

“Each local group of believers is a church. Paul wrote to ‘the church of God in Corinth’ (I Corinthians 1:2); he referred to ‘all the churches of Christ’ (Romans 16:16) and the ‘church of the Laodiceans’ (Colossians 4:16). But he could also use the word *church* to refer to all believers everywhere: ‘Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’ (Ephesians 5:25).

“*The church* exists in several levels. At one level is the universal church, which includes everyone worldwide who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Local churches are a different level, including people who regularly meet together. Denominations are an intermediate level, containing groups of congregations at work more closely together because of shared history and beliefs.

“Local congregations sometimes include unbelievers—family members who have not accepted Jesus as Savior, yet nevertheless meet regularly with believers. Local congregations may also include people who consider themselves to be Christians, but may not be. Experience shows that some of these will later admit that they were not really Christians...”

“Unfortunately, the Christian world is divided into denominations that sometimes squabble with one another. *The church* is not yet perfect, since none of its members is perfect. Nevertheless, Christ wants *the church* to be united (John 17:21). This does not require a merger of organizations, but it does suggest a common purpose...”

Discipleship 101, “What Is the Church?”

The *power* of this false thinking reached far beyond GCI...

WHAT THE SPLINTERS TEACH

Over 200 separate heresies are now taught throughout the splinters. (Almost this many are listed in my book *Surviving "Perilous Times."*) A *great many* are pure Protestantism. Splinter leaders are teaching anew these *same old wrong ideas*, and, therefore, the apostates *still control* the thinking of thousands who feel they left all wrong doctrines and thinking behind. They have *unwittingly* adopted the Protestant view of Christ's Body and Church.

When the splinter leaders accepted the apostates' "harlot" teaching about the "body" of *their* "Jesus," the large splinters unknowingly set themselves up to be thrown OUTSIDE the *true* Body of Christ and directly into the *false*, Protestant, counterfeit, *divided* "body of Christ" idea. All of this, in turn, set the stage for all of God's Church to enter the *divided* Laodicean age in the wake of the apostasy. The reader should reread the last sentence to get it crystal clear in mind before continuing.

Thousands of individual "branches" became cut off from the "Vine."

The (now) *three* largest splinters (with many others) teach that Christ no longer works exclusively in one organization—leading only one unified, organized, uncompromising Church. Since the apostasy, many find themselves feeling forced to believe Christ's Church now consists of *many* "fellowships," "branches" or "communities of believers."

Today, splinter leaders talk of “our true church,” “this true church” or the “true churches of God.” Those same men once believed the opposite—what the scriptures we will review later state. And most of these same men have no real idea—no recollection—of *what* changed their thinking—or *when* it happened. They have forgotten *who* taught them their present understanding!

The leaders of the big splinters and many of the tiny “slivers” decided after the apostasy that God’s Church had been split into many groups. This precisely copies what the reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Jan Hus and Ulrich Zwingli came to believe about the “body of Christ” upon starting separate movements. Consider also that as these men had to *necessarily* reject *Catholic* government, the splinter leaders also had to *necessarily* reject *God’s* government. Here is why.

The Dilemma

The leadership of *one man* (taught by Mr. Armstrong) cannot be spread over *many organizations*. Think about the dilemma your leaders have put themselves in. And think about how it was *JOSEPH W. TKACH and company* (remember, who were taught by the Protestants) who taught these “leaders” to believe what they now teach YOU about *what is God’s Church*. Remaining too long in the WCG left your “leaders” deeply influenced by the *false leaders* there whose *presence* they eventually left, but whose *numerous false doctrines* (there are many others beyond the purview of this book) they took with them when they did. They have been teaching these false doctrines to YOU. While you saw them as “standing up for the truth,” they were in fact standing up for *some* of the truth. When understood, it was the very greatest truths that the apostates helped them to throw out. That is the truth no one else will tell you.

The splinter leaders have rejected God’s rule over them—and they have as much as admitted they have, even though they use Christ’s *name*, by incessantly declaring Him to be the “Head” of their churches (“Body”), anyway. Worse, they have taught brethren to do the same. Read in Matthew 24:4-5 of those who come in Christ’s name—and think of the splinters. Themselves desperately deceived, your leaders are deceiving YOU.

The question becomes do you care? Many do not even seem to know what their organization teaches. I hear this regularly. Upon telling these people what their group believes—and teaches openly—I

hear things like, “Oh, they do? I didn’t know!” They will sometimes go on to ask, “Are you sure?” At this point I am always incredulous, thinking, “Why don’t *you* know?—It’s *your* group! Whose fault is it that you don’t know? Are you checking—are you reading and studying your organization’s literature and really listening to its sermons? If so, how much—and how carefully?”

The United Church of God

Let’s now look at what for a long time was the largest splinter—the United Church of God—teaches on the Body of Christ. The following excerpt comes from a news commentary on UCG’s website showing they understand what the Catholic church believes about the one true Church. It cites the Catholics to deliberately prejudice the UCG membership. Of course, they could not possibly quote *Mr. Armstrong* to prove their point. This would not bring the intended result. In fact, that would likely cause some to go LOOKING for one true Church.

Citing the Catholics as they do effectively produces the knee-jerk bias that UCG’s leaders need in its membership *against* the idea of a single true Church. The article is titled “If Only One True Church, Where Is It?”:

“Pope Benedict firmly believes that the Catholic Church is the only true church and he boldly said so recently. ‘For the second time in a week, Pope Benedict XVI has corrected what he says are erroneous interpretations of the Second Vatican Council, reasserting the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church and saying other Christian communities were either defective or not true churches’ (From Associated Press via *Fox News.Com*, July 10, 2007; Title: *Pope: Other Christian Denominations Not True Churches*). These strong words raised the ire of Protestant and other Christian leaders around the world.

“Non-Catholic Christian leaders were deeply offended over the Pope’s recent comments... They claim that he is eroding or undermining nearly a half century of ecumenism. ‘It makes us question the seriousness with which the Roman Catholic Church takes its dialogues with the Reformed family and other families of the church, said the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, which groups 75 million Reformed Christians in 214 churches in 107 countries’ (ibid.). To some Catholics and many Protestants, the ecumenical movement was greatly enhanced by Vatican II, the 1962-65 meetings that began a procedure to modernize the church.

“Why would the Pope use such seemingly demeaning language?”

“...[W]ithout reservation, the Pope directly stated other Christian denominations were merely ecclesial communities that did not have the necessary means of salvation.”

“What’s the answer to this entanglement? Protestants are disappointed. But to Pope Benedict, there is no entanglement. In his thinking there is only one true church, the Catholic Church. But if the great struggles that Christians suffered to bring about a much needed Reformation are to be considered, that thought seems incredible.”

“True, Jesus said that He would build His church, stipulating that it would never die out (Matthew 16:18). True, it still exists. But how is it to be recognized?”

Jerold Aust, Senior Good News writer

The second paragraph is obviously intended to show how offensive is the Catholic position. Why else would it be included? *Of course* the Protestants are offended at the Catholics over the matter. So why say it? The goal of the writer is to be sure that God’s people are *also offended* at any organization claiming to be the true Church. In effect, it is to get brethren to say of any particular group, “Who do they think they are, claiming Christ’s sole authority?”

Do not miss the cunning psychology employed.

Be Careful!

Before continuing, let’s revisit in another way the faulty logic used against the one true Church doctrine simply because the Catholics teach it. Think for a moment. The Catholics believe salvation comes through Christ’s sacrifice. Should God’s Church therefore reject this understanding—because we cannot dare agree with the Catholics? The Catholics oppose abortion. Should God’s Church take the opposite view to avoid siding with the Catholics? What about same-sex marriage and homosexuality? The Catholics oppose these as well. Are God’s people to condone them because the Catholics do not? What about mercy killing and cloning? The Catholics condemn both—does this mean God’s people should support both? The question always remains what does *God* say. Set aside what men say. Truth is truth, no matter who recognizes or teaches it. Do not allow your convictions to be swayed by faulty human reasoning presented by your leaders.

Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This means there was “good” knowledge *mixed with* “evil” knowledge

(Gen. 2:16-17). The world's churches have *some* truth, but this has never caused God's Church to reject true doctrines simply to avoid what others may believe.

The above UCG commentary links to their booklet on the subject of the true Church. Based on the question brought up by the leadership of United, this organization (openly) rejects any idea that it could be the only true Church.

Notice this from an article titled "How Can You Find the Right Church?" published in UCG's *The Good News* magazine. And note again the collective use of the term "the church" exactly as Protestants use it:

"What is *the Church*?"

"Early in our study we should understand what *the Church* is and is not. We must first understand that *the church* is not a building. The glossary of the Translator's New Testament plainly tells us: "'Church' in NT never means 'building.'" It always represents either a group of committed Christians in any given locality [who] met to practice their religion, or the totality of these groups scattered throughout the world' (pp. 557-558).

"The apostle Paul defines *the Church* as simply 'the body of Christ' (I Corinthians 12:12, 27). It is a *spiritual* organism, not a physical edifice or organization. Members of *the Church* go to the building where they meet, or a congregation meets in someone's house if the numbers are small (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 1:19), but *the Church* is still the spiritual Body of Christ."

According to UCG, the Church does not involve any kind of an *organization*. Remember, we are looking for similarities to what the apostates taught in place of what Mr. Armstrong did. Look at another quote from UCG:

"We believe that *the Church* is that body of believers who have received and are being led by the Holy Spirit. The true Church of God is a spiritual organism. Its biblical name is 'the Church of God'..."

"Frequently Asked Questions"

"Many people have misconceptions about what the word church means. Most equate it with a building. But throughout the Scriptures, church and congregation refer to people, never to a building. In fact, we find several verses in the New Testament where the 'church' (people) were meeting inside certain members' homes (buildings) in the local

area (Romans 16:3-5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; and Philemon 2).

“*The Church* is made up of people called to follow Jesus Christ. That group of people *collectively* is called ‘the body of Christ’ (I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12). It is a spiritually transformed body of believers *not limited to a particular locale, organization or denomination.*”

The Book of Revelation Unveiled

Grace Communion International (recall this is the former WCG) could not have said it better. Keep reading to remove all doubt about UCG’s position:

“As we will see in the pages that follow, the institution to which Jesus referred was not an earthly building or a *mere physical organization*. Rather, *the Church* was and remains the called-out assembly of Christ’s spiritually transformed and faithful followers...”

“...the Church of God...is the body of people who are special to God because they obey His Word and accept His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Messiah...”

“Rather than a building, the Church is *a called-out assembly—the group of believers* invited to come out of the world for God’s special purpose.”

The Church Jesus Built

The language in the last quote is so very blatantly Protestant in not only teaching, but tone. Much can be learned about the *spirit* guiding an organization just by studying language used. Time will almost certainly demonstrate that UCG’s split with the slightly more conservative COGwa group will permit it to speed up its obvious return to the world.

The first large group to leave UCG (in March 1998) calls itself the Church of God, *an International Community*. It is led by David Hulme. You saw his words earlier representing the apostates’ teachings as their spokesman to the world. Here is the group’s formal position:

“We are put (baptized) into the Body of Christ (the Church) by... receiving the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12-13). It is not just ‘me and God and the Bible;’ we are called into *a godly community* with others, ‘into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord’ (I Corinthians 1:9).”

“Foundations” Bible course

We must now ask: Did the leaders who formed the Church of God, a Worldwide Association (COGwa) return to the understanding that Christ's Body and Church is one unified organization? Notice this statement about its inception (my underlining and italics):

“Today we are announcing the formation of a new international *congregation of believers*, the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. Therefore, we are forming this new organization as a home for believers who share our mission, values and beliefs.”

Press Release

On their new website, this group describes themselves as “a vibrant and mission-driven *community* of believers.” The terms they chose are all familiar language. Also, the word “association” connotes the Protestant thinking. In fact, it appears, just as in UCG, that various national assemblies in the international areas are going to act and function more like separate “true churches” that form a kind of bigger “true church” *association* among the many *other* “true churches” outside their borders.

Are you confused? At least pause to remember the simple clarity of Mr. Armstrong's statements about the Bible position—and that “God is not the author of confusion” (I Cor. 14:33).

An important conclusion, not to be missed. The very names chosen—the United Church of God, *an International Association*—Church of God, *an International Community*—and Church of God, *a Worldwide Association*—are revealing. In fact, these *names* are themselves *heresies*. Think. The indefinite article (a, an) used in the middle of each name, coupled with the last word of these names (association, community), tell the tale of how they see themselves—of their very doctrinal position. The discerning person would not need to study *anything* beyond their mere *names* to know that none could *possibly* be the *one* Church that Christ built. Whatever else these groups teach becomes irrelevant because they do not even know what the true Church *is*. (The name “Living Church of God” is also a heresy, but that will be explained momentarily.)

Again, think. Any organization that does not know what the true Church *IS* could never be a candidate to fulfill it. (More on this later.) Those with eyes to see will have no problem understanding this point.

The Living Church of God

Let's now look at what the presiding evangelist, Roderick Meredith, who leads the Living Church of God teaches. It comes from his booklet identi-

fying the true Church. Notice how he tries to validate Protestant teaching by dishonestly invoking Mr. Armstrong’s authority. The first two paragraphs set the stage and the final one drives home the error. Focus on the word “branches.” As you read, ask yourself what your organization teaches about this. This quote appears under the subhead “Different ‘Branches’ of God’s Church” in LCG’s booklet on the true Church (*italics mine*):

“It is important to note that while God’s true Church is one spiritual organism, the Bible shows that *it is normal* for the Church to exist in several *different corporate ‘fellowships’ or ‘branches’* at the same time.

“To be in the body of Christ, you must be fully surrendered to God and be led by God’s Spirit... Yet down through the ages, there have been *many different Church of God fellowships—‘branches’* of the true Church—that sometimes coexisted.

“Jesus tells us, regarding *any* religious organization: ‘By their fruits you will know them’ (Matthew 7:15-20). So it is up to each individual to carefully consider: *Where* is Christ primarily working today? *Who* is preaching more of the Truth? *Who* is most effectively doing the Work of proclaiming the Gospel to the public all over the world?

“The Worldwide Church of God became, by far, the largest group of true believers who surrendered their lives... Even during this time, however, there existed the aforementioned groups of the Seventh Day Church of God. *Mr. Armstrong often acknowledged* that these different *fellowships* were ‘branches’ of the true Church. [**You will momentarily be left to ask, “How could he possibly write this about Mr. Armstrong?”**]

“We understand from the Bible and from history that the Church of God is the ‘body’ of Jesus Christ—the body of believers in the genuine Truth of the Bible... Within the *greater body* of Christ... Where those people are gathered into *different corporate fellowships*, there will be *differing strengths* and *varying emphases*. But outflowing love... should be present in converted members of God’s Church, no matter where they live and to which particular *fellowship* they belong.”

Where Is God’s True Church Today?, Roderick C. Meredith

By no stretch does this represent either the teaching of the Bible or what Mr. Armstrong taught God’s people about who and what Christ’s Church is. The last sentence in the fourth paragraph is patently false. You saw Mr. Armstrong earlier explain the correct meaning of “branches”—in direct disagreement with such a falsehood of one claiming to quote him. (You will read Mr. Armstrong again momentarily.) By now you

know there is simply no such thing as a “*greater* body of Christ,” involving “different corporate fellowships,” with “differing strengths” and “varying emphases.” Yet, THOUSANDS who once knew better are now falling for such appalling deceit—and ignorance!

I do not ask or want you to believe my characterization of Mr. Armstrong. Therefore, his words return from earlier to remove all doubt on his teaching about “branches.” They need to be read *again* in the context of such blatant dishonesty with Mr. Armstrong’s teaching on a doctrine of such far-reaching importance. This was the last time he wrote the WCG on the subject of the true Church. In what may have been the largest article he ever wrote in his ministry, he wanted to be conclusive (emphasis mine):

“Little groups, splintering off...They are not pleasing God or being blessed by Him. Jesus said, ‘By their fruits you shall know them.’ They usually claim to be ‘*branches*’ of the Church of God. But Jesus said, ‘I will build my Church,’ (Matt. 16:18). He did not say denominations, sects, cults, *branches* or a church divided against itself. Rather He said a house divided against itself cannot stand. There is one true Church and one only. The apostle Paul pictured *humanly self-appointed ‘branches’* when he said to the *elders* of the local church at Ephesus that some of their own selves would *depart to draw a following after themselves*. [Notice again Mr. Armstrong’s connection to *how—why—such “branches” can appear.*]

“Paul said, ‘But now are they many members, yet one body’ (I Corinthians 12:20). How was that one body organized? Did it have one government? ‘And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers...’ (verse 28). Verse 25 shows there should be no divisions in the body—*no branches or branch organizations.*”

“The Church is ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy Temple in the Lord’ (Ephesians 2:20-21). Note, the Church is organized and fitly framed together, *not* organized with *competing and differing branches.*”

“*Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God,*” *Worldwide News*, June 24, 1985

Reread Roderick Meredith’s quote before asking: Is it possible that this senior leader has merely *forgotten* the truth—even one so colossal—and slipped back into the beliefs of his well-known Methodist youth? He was 37 years under Mr. Armstrong, starting from age 19! Perhaps he

never agreed with Mr. Armstrong. You are left to decide if something so important could be *forgotten* by one so long in such high position.

Now carefully read again the quote from the United Methodist Church about how they see Christ's Church, and note the phrases in italics that line up almost perfectly with what Roderick Meredith wrote. The *spirit* guiding him and the one guiding the Methodist church is so clearly seen to be the same:

“The *branches* of Christ's church have developed *diverse traditions* that enlarge our store of *shared understandings*. Our avowed ecumenical commitment as United Methodists is to gather our own *doctrinal emphases* into the *larger Christian unity*, there to be made more meaningful in a *richer whole*.”

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

Considering such almost identical language used, can there be the slightest doubt that the LCG leader reflects straightforward Methodist/Protestant theology? Yet his defenders will almost certainly attack me for pointing it out rather than defend Mr. Armstrong against such damnable misrepresentation of his teaching.

No less damnable is that the very *name* of the Living Church of God is an outright perversion of Scripture—I Timothy 3:15, which contains the Bible definition of the New Testament Church and speaks of “the Church of the *living God*.” Roderick Meredith moves the emphasis of “living”—that God places on *Himself*—and shifts it to his living *church*—on how his human *organization* should be thought of as what is “living” rather than God's emphasis on how HE is the living God—the God who gives the Church everything, including its *life*. Throughout the Bible, God places an emphasis on how He is the God who is alive—and how *this* is what differentiates Him from all other gods in the nations around Israel. Merely think of Moses in Exodus being told by God to tell Pharaoh that he was sent by “I AM” (3:14), which means the Eternal, the Ever-living One, or the God who is alive.

Finally, take a moment to also read John 14:6, and how this same God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, calls Himself “the way, the truth, and the *life*.” Then ask how thousands of LCG members could let their leaders get away with pulling such an inward, self-focused stunt through dishonesty with God's Word—and on the very name under which they reside. If you think this is “no big deal,” consider whether God agrees with you. Consider how He feels about life inherent within Him.

Make yourself think—and *think*—and THINK—about these things!

Certain Slivers

Here is what a small splinter, the Church of the Great God, led by John Ritenbaugh, teaches on its website. It also clones the apostates:

“We believe we are *part of* the one true church founded by Jesus Christ on Pentecost in AD 31, but we do *not* teach that we are *exclusively* the true church. The church of God is shown in Scripture to be a spiritual organism composed of individuals in whom resides the Holy Spirit. These ‘called-out ones’ are scattered throughout the world, *attending many* of the physical *organizations* we call *churches of God*. They believe and observe God’s Word—including the ten commandments, the Sabbaths, the food laws, etc.—reject any form of the false Trinity doctrine, and are preparing for God’s soon-coming Kingdom.”

Frequently Asked Questions

The Church of God 21st Century, a small sliver, led by longtime evangelist Raymond F. McNair until his death in October 2008, teaches this:

“Why are there now over 300 ‘Churches of God,’ all of which sprang from the WCG? Is there only ONE TRUE CHURCH?...Is God’s Church today one single, unified Church of God, or are God’s people scattered among many Churches of God? Why do we see so many commandment-keeping ‘Churches of God’ in the world today? Didn’t Christ say He would establish ‘one Church’—‘one Body’? How is it then, there are now many independently organized Churches of God—most of whom claim to ‘keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus’ (Rev. 14:12)?...[A] personal friend realized that members of Christ’s spiritual ‘Body’ are scattered through many ‘Churches of God.’ Nonetheless, he repeatedly asked why Christ’s Church is ‘so divided.’ After I explained the answer, he understood. I told him it is impossible for the true ‘Church of God’ to be divided! God’s Church is not, and never has been, a ‘corporate organization,’ as in the U.S. and other parts of the world.

“I told my friend he could only understand the answer to his question—if he accepts the biblical truth that God’s ‘true Church’ is a ‘SPIRITUAL ORGANISM’—not a humanly organized ‘church,’ incorporated under the laws of man. In early N.T. times, the ministry didn’t incorporate, as we do today. The true ‘Church of God’ is a spiritual organism, which God calls ‘the Body of Christ’ (I Cor. 12:27). That

‘Body’ is not, and never can be, divided, because it is the ‘Body of Christ,’ and His ‘Body’ cannot be severed into many parts, any more than a human body can be cut into separate parts, and still survive. Jesus said God’s ‘Church’ cannot die, or be destroyed”

“Where Is God’s True Church Today?”, Raymond F. McNair

By now it should be clear that the author’s thinking fell perfectly in line with the Protestant view. I knew this man very well. He was the brother of my brother-in-law. I know that he truly anguished over the state of God’s flock. He left the Living Church of God *twice* because of all of its doctrinal errors and the nature of its leader. He wanted to come with The Restored Church of God, and we talked about his biggest objection several times, over a two-year period. Having lost sight of how Christ governs His Church, and what *is* the Church, he stated he would only come with Restored if we would admit that we were also a splinter—albeit, as he put it, the “*best* splinter.” This is why he chose us as where he might finally reside. Try as I might, I could never convince this evangelist (who was ordained in 1952) that he had rejected Mr. Armstrong’s teaching. He was literally unable to believe me. We both regretted that this difference would not permit us to walk together. Here is more from his article, under the subhead “Scattering of God’s Sheep Foretold”:

“While alive, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, a faithful end-time shepherd, held *most* of ‘God’s flock’ together, but when he was ‘smitten’ by death in January 1986, this opened the way for God’s end-time ‘flock’ to become scattered. Jeremiah predicted this scattering (Jer. 23:1-4), as did the Prophet Ezekiel. (Ezek. 34:1-12). A careful reading warns us that the ministers would do the scattering. Paul showed that certain ministers would also be guilty of later scattering God’s people (Acts 20:17-20, 27-35). Sadly, the ministers, who should feed and protect the ‘sheep of God,’ are often guilty of scattering those same sheep! Some have been guilty of ruling over God’s people ‘with force and cruelty’ (Ezek. 34:4, 22)!...”

“Where is God’s true Church today? It has been splintered and scattered, resulting in hundreds of small ‘Churches of God.’ The Church which Jesus said He would build is not to be found today in one single ‘church.’ Instead, true members of the Body of Christ are now found in many ‘Church of God’ fellowships, scattered across the entire globe. Let us tear down some of the barriers between brother and brother, and between the various ‘Churches of God’! Instead of putting up barriers, let us build bridges. Instead of criticism and condemna-

tion, let us seek peace and reconciliation among all the scattered members of the ‘Body of Christ,’ now found in various ‘splinter groups’!” **[Of course, Mr. McNair’s call for unity has been no more successful in the world of the splinters than was John Calvin’s in the Protestant world.]**

“*Where Is God’s True Church Today?*”, Raymond F. McNair

Recognize again that all such statements are guided by the same spirit of error (I John 4:6; II Cor. 11:4) that leads the Protestants. Tapping into this spirit—SATAN’S SPIRIT!—the spirit that leads the entire Protestant world (with all Christendom)—is what *quickly* destroyed the WCG. Now understand! Because virtually all of the splinters have thrown out the truth that Mr. Armstrong taught about Christ’s Body (and, of course, much more), this SAME SPIRIT has been permitted to enter and is now *slowly* destroying the splinters, some faster than others.

The *spirit of error* will only grow stronger and more pervasive wherever it has been permitted to enter, because even “a *little* leaven leavens the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9; I Cor. 5:6). Error regarding what is the Church Christ built—necessarily of course ultimately also involving its identity—brings more leaven to the dough of truth by itself than a whole case of baking soda to physical dough. (Also read II Timothy 2:17.) Mr. Armstrong strongly warned against letting the devil into the Church even “a little bit,” as he put it, because he would “push open the door since he is stronger than we” (also his exact words). This has happened in a big way in the big splinters, among others!

The “Spirit of Antichrist”

The Bible warns about the “spirit of antichrist” (I John 4:3). The word *antichrist* means “an adversary or opponent of Christ,” or *against* Christ. Recall that Jesus declared, “He that is not *with* Me is *against* Me; and he that *gathers* not *with* Me *scatters* abroad” (Matt. 12:30). On the basis of this passage alone, the splinter leaders and all their members would do well to re-examine where they are—and do this in contrast to what they once had.

Now think: If Christ has *many* true churches—*many* places where He is gathering—how does this verse apply? On what basis could one discern which organizations—how many—are true and how many are false? There would be no way to know who is scattering and who is gathering. The answer would be reduced to human opinion, with every minister’s and member’s opinion as good as the next.

Let's connect the dots. Jesus Christ built a Church—*His Church*—the TRUE Church. *His* people are part of that one, undivided organization—and none other. Anyone working AGAINST *that Church*—who is not *with* it, and therefore not “*with*” Christ—or is in any way attempting to “scatter” Christ's flock, rather than “gather” it to where He is leading—is obviously AGAINST Christ. (Now recall Mr. Armstrong's quote from earlier about Jesus' statement in Matthew 12:30. A stronger, even clearer quote from him comes near the end of the book.)

All such then would be ANTICHRIST! Is that clear? Realize that the apostle John warned of *many* antichrists (I John 2:18) in the first century who had infiltrated and were harassing the true Church. It should be obvious that all antichrists certainly bring the “spirit” of antichrist. The next passage shows this connection—and the reader had better grasp it.

Perhaps the greatest single way men today have adopted the doctrine of anti-christ is in the now almost universal teaching throughout the splinters and slivers that God's Church—the Body of Christ—is divided and scattered. This in effect directly teaches people to not come back together—to where Christ is gathering. Jesus said one is either *gathering with Him* or is *scattering against Him* (Matt. 12:30). Those who teach the Church is scattered could scarcely work harder toward the latter end. And recognize that it is in this context that Christ warned about the unpardonable sin (vs. 31-32). May this sober you. Those working to gather God's people back to His Church—to bring others to the same condition—the same place—are working *with* Christ. An entire chapter (nine) is devoted to explaining more about this all-important subject. It leaves no excuse for misunderstanding.

The last passage in Scripture containing “antichrist” warns this: “Believe not every spirit, but TRY the *spirits whether they are of God*: because many *false prophets* are gone out into the world...*this is that spirit of antichrist*, whereof you have heard that IT should come; and even now already is IT in the world” (I John 4:1, 3).

This passage is of colossal importance. False prophets—these are all throughout the world today—are tied in this passage to the *SPIRIT of antichrist*. (II Corinthians 11:13-15 warns you that these men are smooth operators—“deceitful workers.”) Also notice that I John 4:3 uses the word “it”—not *he* or *them*—“should come,” and that “it”—not *he* or *them*—“is already in the world.” An antichrist is more than just a person or a number of people. It is an attitude, an idea, false teachings—a SPIRIT!—and these all flow from the spirit that is alien to God.

The next three verses in the context of John's warning (I John 4:4-6) are absolutely crucial to understand. They become vital instruction for

you: “You are of God, little children [true Christians], and have overcome them [all false prophets and false ministers—antichrists]: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is *in the world*. They [the antichrists] are of the world: therefore speak they *of the world*, and the world hears them [yes, but not true Christians]. We are of God: he that knows God hears us [God’s faithful ministers]; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the *Spirit of truth*, and the *spirit of error*.”

Let’s continue being plain: God’s people *overcome* the spirit of antichrist. They listen only to God’s ministers. This spirit applies to people, authorities, attitudes and actions. And it permeates all cultures of the world—most obviously including the Catholic and Protestant world—because all nations are led and deceived by the devil (II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:9).

Do Not Misunderstand

It is important to understand that I am not saying that all of the brethren in the splinters now no longer have God’s Spirit. Many still do! The problem is that *two different spirits*—God’s and Satan’s—are at work there. Where Satan’s spirit is present (as leaven)—beginning with the door being thrown open to Satan—God’s Spirit will tend to diminish and eventually disappear, with the spirit of Satan ultimately taking over completely. Another Jesus, another gospel and another *spirit* are taking the splinters directly **BACK TO THE WORLD!** That they have adopted the world’s definition of Christ’s Church is but one (albeit an enormous) part of this.

This is the oft-repeated message of 2,000 years of New Testament Church history. And “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Most brethren cannot even remember this much.

Think of what is at stake in getting this understanding wrong!

Now grasp this. The spirit of the *true* Christ would never direct the “church” and “work” of those guided by *another* spirit, which invariably introduces *another* gospel, *another* Jesus, with *another* counterfeit “body of Christ.” Also, the *true* Christ would never lead an organization that has openly permitted the “spirit of error” to compete with His leadership.

Read and reread all that you have seen here until it becomes crystal clear—until it is impossible to misunderstand *what is at stake* in the choice of which organization you enter. Remember, the true Christ is not divided—meaning there is only one true Church of God! Until you find *that* Church—the one and only unified Body of Christ—you cannot “plug back

in” to the living Christ who heads it—AND ONLY IT! Lacking this reconnection, you simply cannot replenish the Spirit of God—now partially lost in you, and running out of your “lamp” (Matt. 25:8), your Bible. This prohibits you from anointing your eyes to regain sight (Rev. 3:18)!

What could be more important?

Administrative Impossibility

Consider a practical point: If Christ’s Body is spread across many organizations, how would the clear biblical command to disfellowship a wayward member ever be followed (I Cor. 5:5; Rom. 16:17)? Among the splinters, if a member falls into blatant sin, spreads heresy, sows division or engages in otherwise destructive conduct, and is put out of the group he attends, he can simply move on to another group—another “true Church”—and likely be seen as a hero by brethren there. Would Christ permit such chaos—such confusion and blockage of His purpose—under the direction of His leadership? (This topic returns later in more detail.)

In Revelation 3:16, Christ describes having “spewed” those who are *lukewarm* “out of His mouth.” The obvious meaning is that these (Laodiceans in context) have been vomited out of His Body. What else could it possibly mean? Think. It requires no interpretation. The entire final era of people have been described as spewed out of Christ’s *Body*. *This is what He said He did!* (Let it not be lost on you that human beings spew *vomit* from their mouths. Then connect this to the Laodicean condition of “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.” It becomes obvious such people were nauseating to Christ—they were poisoning His Body.) Next note that in Revelation 3:20, Christ is described as standing *outside* knocking on the “door” of where each of these people resides.

Think a second time. The meaning has to be an additional biblical reference to how Christ’s people of the seventh era are now *outside His Body*. But He is inviting them back into it—to resubmit themselves to Him as “Head” of that Body—to be branches grafted back into the Vine—to receive more of His Spirit and Word of truth in their lives—to participate in His true Work. (The most important book to the splinters is “*Anoint Your Eyes*” – *Christ’s Warning to His People*. If the reader has not read this truly vital book, it should be next on your list.)

You have already heard much from Mr. Armstrong. But he taught many other things related to the great truth that we are examining.

MORE FROM MR. ARMSTRONG

Before examining what God’s Word teaches about the Church and Body of Christ, it comes time to examine more from Mr. Armstrong regarding topics connected to the true Church.

While not the focus of this book, it is necessary to mention that Mr. Armstrong clearly understood that God’s government begins with His working through *one man*. He recognized that this government has *always* been from the top down—beginning with *one man*, which means it must *always* rest in ONE ORGANIZATION. Again, there is no way the leadership of *one man* can be divided among *several organizations*. Do not be among those who conveniently believe that how *seventh* era leaders design their government alters how God governs those where He is working.

Ask as you read if you still believe Mr. Armstrong’s words. Here comes the basic pattern within God’s government that Mr. Armstrong consistently taught from 1952 through the rest of his ministry (all emphasis his):

“And a century of time cycles after the first birth of the Church was a TIME that God *DID USE* as a time to start a REBIRTH of His Church, when once again just before the close of the 6,000-year duration of the ‘day of man,’ and the ushering in of the day of the LORD, His Gospel of the Kingdom would be proclaimed worldwide (Matt. 24:14).

“We need to understand a PRINCIPLE by which God always has worked through humans. He has always worked through *ONE MAN* at a time. He worked through Abraham. He worked through Moses, through Joshua, through one ‘judge’ at a time, through Samuel, through David, through Solomon. He worked through Peter and when Peter had left the Middle East, through Paul. These men had, in greater or lesser number, staff assistants under them, but God’s WORK was through the *ONE MAN AT A TIME!*”

“Just What Is ‘The Work’?”, Good News, April 1981

Mr. Armstrong never saw Peter and Paul as the leaders of two separate “true churches.” This is a dishonest rendering of a necessary organizational structure involving the need to work with two entirely different kinds of people—Jews and Gentiles—for reasons unique to geography and the first century. The subject of Peter and Paul returns near the book’s end.

Understand the wisdom and insight of Mr. Armstrong’s next statement. Every minister and member in the splinters would do well to consider these words. It reveals *how* the true Church *remains* unified:

“Yes, those who do not want GOD’S GOVERNMENT thru His ministers of HIS choosing, but want to do whatever is right in their own eyes today, actually want to DISOBEY the direct command of GOD! Let them read these Scriptures, and then try to *answer* GOD in the final judgment!”

“And this system of disobeying the DIRECT COMMAND: ‘Ye shall NOT do...every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes,’ has split and re-split the churches of this world *since* Christ.”

“Two men in the Church at Philippi were in disagreement over some point. In his letter to the church there, Paul gave them a command. He did NOT say, ‘each of you go ahead believing what is right in your own eyes, and have tolerance toward the other.’ He rather commanded ‘that they be *of the same mind* IN THE LORD.’ (Phil. 4:2). Notice carefully, not merely of the same mind! Not the same mind in error. But IN THE LORD!”

“The Church is to be perfectly joined together—that’s UNITY! But HOW?—‘in the SAME MIND’—‘all speaking the same thing.’ But it must be the RIGHT thing, and it must be the MIND OF CHRIST!”

“Now, I ask you, brethren, HOW can this be possible, when different minds see things in different ways, UNLESS GOD HAS PROVIDED A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, DIRECTLY INSPIRED AND LED OF CHRIST, WHICH CAN RIGHTLY

APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S LAW IN DOUBTFUL INSTANCES WHERE MINDS LESS MATURE SPIRITUALLY CANNOT CLEARLY AGREE?" **[Why cannot the splinters see this?]**

"...*When* there is such disagreement—when questions are left undefined by CHRIST'S authority and threaten division in the Body—the very machinery Christ set within His Church for defining such questions must be put into action."

"Some apply themselves more diligently—study harder—spend more time in prayer and study and meditation...And it is these...whom Christ has CHOSEN as His ministers!"

"And it is THESE, who form the *central authority*, or the instrument *within* the Church, thru whom CHRIST HIMSELF may REVEAL the true definition of HIS LAW, and SETTLE such disputes or differences of opinion."

"The Epistles of Paul form a large part of the New Testament. They are *corrective*. They have to do with *problems* that arose in the Church, which Paul *settled with authority*. They are *administrative* letters."

"If any do not wish to submit to GOD'S RULE, as God Himself has chosen to administer it—THRU CHRIST—*thru His apostle and ministers*—then they have not surrendered to GOD and His authority over them—they have not repented—they have not even made the *very first* step toward conversion, and **[Get this!]** they certainly are NOT members of the Body of Christ!"

"Christ Did Put Authority and RULE in His Church!",
Good News, Jan. 1957

"The Work of God was originally started by ONE man—Jesus Christ. But on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, the same Holy Spirit that had carried on God's Work through his individual body entered into and empowered his apostles, and the entire COLLECTIVE BODY, which on and from that day constituted God's Church."

Brethren Letter, October 25, 1985

Benchmark Member Letter

What follows next is a very extensive statement from Mr. Armstrong. The subject of how many organizations God chooses to work through at one time would be incomplete without it. It is from Mr. Armstrong's benchmark May 1974 Member letter of 30 pages! This single letter, carrying much more extensive proof beyond what can be quoted here,

set the standard for what the entire Church understood and believed about government when it was confronted (in February 1974) with the greatest rebellion that had occurred in the Philadelphian era to that point (all emphasis still his):

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

“Many times I have told you, dear Brethren, that when God first called me, beginning in the autumn of 1926, that the living Christ brought me into His truth a step at a time. YOU have not had to learn the truth so slowly—Christ used me to do it for you. And one of the very last truths He opened to me was that of CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT!”

“Brethren, I have felt it necessary that you should know and understand these things, so you may realize WHY I did not yet fully understand the truth regarding church government and organization, in February, 1939—MORE THAN 35 YEARS AGO—when I wrote an article on church organization.” **[Many critics love to quote Mr. Armstrong’s 1939 article as a means of rejecting God’s form of government. Why do they not quote his commentary about it 35 years later in this letter? He adds more later.]**

“There had been much confusion and argument among the ‘Sardis’ brethren about church organization. When the new so-called ‘Bible Form of Church Organization’ was introduced at Salem, naturally the Stanberry people argued against it. I think we all became confused on the question. It’s like being too close to one tree to see the forest...In both of those—Stanberry and Salem—the people voted—government from the bottom like these dissenters today.”

“We published an article revealing new truth about church organization in The GOOD NEWS, November, 1952, and again in August, 1953, ‘GOVERNMENT in Our Church,’ and in November, 1953, ‘JUDGING and DISCIPLINE in God’s Church.’ As God revealed truth, His Church accepted it. And long since, we came into the FULL TRUTH on church organization and government.”

“Brethren, CAN YOUR MIND COMPREHEND THE TRANSCENDENT MAGNITUDE OF [GOD’S] SUPREME PURPOSE? The entire UNIVERSE to be put UNDER SUBJECTION to you? That means you are to RULE over it all—IF you are submissive, obedient to God and His government over you NOW!”

“Do you want to let resentment against God’s government over you NOW disqualify you—snatch you from God’s GRACE and PURPOSE

for you, and cast you into a lake of fire? God's PURPOSE for us is SO GREAT, we need to FEAR lest Satan divert our minds from that GOAL! Satan is subtle!"

"Notice, now, the FORM, or PRINCIPLE of God's government in ancient Israel: It's given in Exodus 18:13-27."

"Here is government FROM THE TOP (GOD) on down. Here is God's own PYRAMID principle of government in ancient Israel.

"At that time the whole NATION—with church and state united—occupied one concise area. The form of organization could be administered by ONE MAN under God, at the top. It was Government from GOD. Under the Eternal God in authority was Moses. Under Moses a NUMBER of rulers, each over THOUSANDS (it could have been several thousands under each ruler). Under each ruler of a thousand, rulers over hundreds. Under each ruler of a hundred, rulers of fifties, and under each of them rulers of tens.

"It was RULE FROM THE TOP DOWN—that is, FROM GOD—it was the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! God chose Moses. Moses chose rulers of thousands, and so on down."

"In the days of Samuel, the people of Israel rejected GOD as their real Ruler, ruling through such humans as HE chose, as at that time, God was ruling through Samuel. They demanded a MAN to be their king. God gave them Saul, who rebelled against God. Then God gave them David, a man after His own heart. Still it was government FROM THE TOP DOWN!

"That is God's PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENT. It's the SAME TODAY in His Church! He says, 'I CHANGE NOT!' (Mal. 3:6)."

"As we progress through the Bible on the question of GOVERNMENT, the PRINCIPLE of government, from the TOP DOWN, is consistent. But the application, or details of STRUCTURE differs, and varies to adapt to the time, conditions and facilities. The revolters from God's Work confuse structural form with PRINCIPLE of government, which is ALWAYS from the TOP (GOD) down. They are NOT THE SAME.

"In the Old Testament, God chose ONE (Moses, Samuel, Saul, David, etc.) at a time, UNDER GOD, because Israel was ONE nation in ONE location or area. ONE at the top of the human level, under God, with others under him, was all that was required to administer the PRINCIPLE of government FROM THE TOP DOWN.

"But in the first century of the Gospel Work in the New Testament, God was sending the Gospel into MANY COUNTRIES, over wide areas. So He organized His Work into TWO principal divisions, or

areas—ISRAEL and GENTILES. They were widely separated geographically. Communication was virtually nil, except by personal contact. Transportation was by foot, horse or muleback, or by camel or elephant, or sailboat. If Peter were the sole human head under Christ, it might take him weeks to communicate with the man next under him in Rome, if he were in Jerusalem. So God worked directly with TWO in separated areas...With such communication and transportation facilities available today, Christ requires only ONE, once again, directly under him. Several times I have questioned whether Christ would ordain one or several more apostles, but always on counseling with evangelists, their response has been a decisive and absolute ‘NO.’”

“Brethren, we in God’s Church are being trained and prepared, NOW, to RULE in the Kingdom of God during the millennium. What KIND (principle) of government are we being trained to administer?”

“Brethren, we are IN TRAINING, NOW, for...RULE in the KINGDOM OF GOD.

“And what PRINCIPLE of government? From the TOP DOWN. From GOD—it is HIS Government—the GOVERNMENT of God the Father. Under Him is Christ. Under Christ, over ISRAEL will be the resurrected DAVID. Under David, each over one of the twelve tribes, the TWELVE ORIGINAL APOSTLES. Under each of them, rulers over CITIES.

“DEMOCRACY, from the bottom up—every man doing what seems right IN HIS OWN EYES, would never prepare you to REIGN with Christ then. THINK, Brethren, what it would mean if you should REBEL against God’s Government as HE has placed it in HIS CHURCH NOW, and follow the dissenters OUT of God’s Church, into what unauthorized humans have ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES into—an ‘ASSOCIATED CHURCH.’ [**Think UCGaia, COGaic, COGwa.**] I should demand PROOF that such is of GOD. There is NO EVIDENCE. It is of MEN—disloyal, selfish men—swayed and deceived by Satan!” [**Will Mr. Armstrong’s words move you? Or will you think Christ permitted him to get it wrong?**]

“...the GOVERNMENT OF GOD [is] organized from the TOP DOWN.”

“Now let’s look into New Testament teaching to see how this is POSITIVELY REVEALED.

“I quoted from Galatians 2:7-8 about how Paul was assigned by Christ to head THE WORK to the Gentiles.

“Now notice Titus 1:4-5 and 2:15—Paul wrote to Titus (UNDER PAUL), ‘To Titus, mine own son after the common faith (even as those

under me in THE WORK today, are MY own sons, directly or indirectly, in the Lord), ...from God the Father (first in rank) and the Lord Jesus Christ (second in rank) our Savior. For this cause left I (next in rank—to Gentiles—under Christ) thee (under Paul’s authority in the Work) in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders (under Titus who is under Paul, who is under Christ) in every city as I had appointed thee.’

“No authority in the Church? What did God MEAN when He says in His Word, ‘OBEY them that have the RULE over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account (as I know I shall) that they may do it with JOY, and not with grief: for that (causing those over you grief) is unprofitable for YOU. Pray for us (THOSE OF US GOD HAS SET IN AUTHORITY TODAY) for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things, willing to live honestly’ (Heb. 13:17-18). **[How does this paragraph fit if a disgruntled or divisive member could just stroll over to another “true church”?]**

“No government in God’s Church? Then WHY did God inspire this to the Thessalonians? ‘And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are OVER YOU in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves’ (I Thes. 5:12-13). **[Same question.]**

“One of the things SATAN works overtime in injecting into any mind that will let it enter, is RESENTMENT OF AUTHORITY. GOD’S authority is administered in LOVE—and actually as one SERVING those under His authority for THEIR GOOD and out of loving CONCERN for them. That is the way I try to use what authority God has delegated to me, and I try to teach those under me to use it in the same manner—as a servant, not one lording it over those under him—as JESUS gave us an example. Satan DESPISES government, except as HE himself harshly and in hate employs it. **[Yet Mr. Armstrong’s understanding of government has been variously described by critics as “unloving,” “authoritarian,” “dictatorial,” “harsh,” “Roman Catholic” and “domineering.” The truth is that many WCG ministers were that way, but it was certainly never what Mr. Armstrong wanted or taught. (Of course, many others were extremely liberal and permissive.) Also, the natural tendency of every human being in the Church is to resent authority—Romans 8:7.]**

“But what does God say about DESPISING GOVERNMENT?”

“But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and DESPISE GOVERNMENT. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption’ (II Peter 2:10-12).

“Brethren, THAT’S GOD’S WORD, not mine!

“Now notice I Corinthians 12. In this chapter God is showing that in THE WORK of the Church—proclaiming the Gospel to the world, and feeding the flock, there are different ADMINISTRATIONS, different OPERATIONS, in the Church, and for these, God has given various spiritual GIFTS, or empowerments, by His Holy Spirit.”

“...So in the Church, God has set differences of ADMINISTRATIONS. For example, we have today the Division of Church Administration (CAD), or, Executive Administration over ministers and churches. There is the Educational Administration, or Executive direction over the Colleges and Imperial Schools. There is Publishing Administration, Broadcast Administration over radio and TV, etc. This of necessity requires organization. The exact pattern or STRUCTURE may vary according to conditions, needs, etc., but the PRINCIPLE of the organization MUST BE THAT OF GOD’S GOVERNMENT, from the TOP, God, then Christ, on down, as CHRIST has directed and chosen.”

“The very fact that God has endowed different members in His Church with additional spiritual gifts, added to their own natural talents and abilities, in itself shows emphatically that there is definite ORGANIZATION in His Church, and that the ORGANIZATION must flow from a chain of authority, according to the PRINCIPLE which GOD (our legislative branch), has set—that is, AUTHORITY FROM THE TOP DOWN. That is the PRINCIPLE. The OPERATIONS refers to functioning according to the practical application of the PRINCIPLE of government given us by GOD.

“The ADMINISTRATIONS in the Church refers to executive performance and managerial responsibilities, NOT to policy-making. In other words, adapting the method of functioning, according to the PRINCIPLE which GOD (the Policy Maker and Law Giver), not we, has laid down.”

“Now WHAT is this chapter (I Corinthians 12) showing? That the Church is ONE—and ONE ONLY—and has many members. That there are different Administrations and different operations (verses 5-6). That

there are different spiritual GIFTS (but ONE SPIRIT—verses 4, 7-11). Christ is the Head of the Church, called ‘the Body of Christ,’ having many members for many functions. To show many functions, it is compared to the human body (verses 12-26). Then, we read of the respective offices in rank (verses 27-30).”

“So, as to RANK of offices of executive administration, and operational functions, ‘And GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (languages)’ (I Cor. 12:28).”

“Notice now! GOD says—the Holy WORD OF GOD says: ‘And GOD set some in the church, first, apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers...’ That’s what GOD says. But [a] leader of the theology of the dissenters from God’s Church says, ‘BUT I THINK it is far better to call these titles, rather than ranks.’ He THINKS his way around the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and the AUTHORITY which CHRIST has delegated.”

“GOD SAYS, first, secondly, thirdly. But HE THINKS his way around GOD’S WORD! Brethren, GOD’S Church dares not handle the Word of God so carelessly, so deceptively.”

“In the world of the unconverted, those in authority do exercise lordship over those under them. Christ said it should NOT be so with us. But He did not in so saying abolish all authority or rulership. He PUT RULERSHIP in His Church. He DELEGATED authority. What He was teaching His future apostles, is that we in GOD’S GOVERNMENT should NOT bear rule IN THE SAME HARSH AND UNLOVING MANNER as the unconverted in the world.

“Let’s get this point CLEAR. It’s basic. Misunderstanding at this point has caused some to leave God’s Church, and perhaps even God’s salvation and gift of eternal life!

“Notice what Jesus taught...in Mark 10:42: ‘...ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them...but so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...’ But no one can say Jesus had no authority.

“Years ago, seeing this, and not considering the many, MANY Scriptures charging some in the Church with authority, rulership, saying to ‘rebuke’ the unruly, etc., I took the above scriptures to mean there is no authority in the Church. I did not want to exercise authority. I was still

NEW in God's truth (this was over 40 years ago). So, in the early days of the parent Church of the Philadelphia era, at Eugene, Oregon, I allowed 'wolves in sheeps' clothing' to come in and sow the seeds of discord among brethren. It resulted in splitting the church in two—possibly turning half my flock onto the way that leads into a lake of fire! God had His own way of REBUKING ME SOUNDLY, making me see this in its true light. Jesus here is talking about THE MANNER in which the authority Christ delegates is used. He is NOT saying there is NO AUTHORITY."

"...in the same speech where Jesus taught against 'lording it over' those under one's authority [Luke 22], He delegated to them authority of KINGSHIP, sitting on twelve thrones.

"I have had to correct some under me in God's Work on this very point—the manner in which authority was used. Those of us in God's Church are not YET perfect. We must OVERCOME and GROW in grace. But the remedy is not to take all authority which Christ has delegated OUT of the Church, but to learn to administer it IN THE MANNER Christ has taught."

"The parallel instruction on the RANK of authority in the Church is Ephesians 4, beginning with verse 11: 'And he (Christ) gave some,...' The RSV translates it more clearly: 'And His gifts were that some should be apostles,' etc. Continue, 'some prophets, and some evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for THE WORK of the ministry (proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world), for the edifying of the body of Christ...'"

"Dear Brethren, I feel like writing to you as the Apostle John did, as 'my little children,' (I John 2:1)—for, directly or indirectly, you are my sons and daughters in the Lord—or of the Work which Christ raised up through me. We are right now in the time of FINAL EXAMS—of severe trying and testing—to determine whether we shall make it into God's Kingdom and eternal life—to be a priest or king, ruling under Christ for a thousand years—and after that, the WHOLE UNIVERSE under our feet! The future before us is so transcendently ENORMOUS we cannot now fully conceive of it."

"Let's not fail in these final exams."

Brethren Letter, May 2, 1974

This has been a very powerful excerpt—one that should periodically be reviewed for its clarity. In fact, the entire letter is worth finding and reading. Mr. Armstrong left no doubt about God's pattern of government.

Constant Theme

Herbert W. Armstrong spoke constantly of organization, structure and absolute *unity* within the Church, so necessary to stabilize and feed God's flock. Many today have come to believe that Christ no longer requires such complete unity—or that it was ever possible in the first place. As a result, many no longer even *look* for one, unified organization under Christ—willingly allowing themselves to be duped into the false teaching that God's Church is split between differing organizations. They believe that after Mr. Armstrong's death, the Body of Christ changed:

“The Word of God clearly teaches us that there is but the ONE Spirit, and the ONE Body. (I Cor. 12:12-13, 20).”

“That ONE BODY of Christ, carrying on HIS WORK, must function as a UNIT. It must work in harmony and unity, with teamwork, for God is not the author of confusion. There must be no pulling off in different directions by different men *in* that one Body. There must be no competition, or division. And any who knowingly promotes, or encourages anyone in promoting, such disharmony, competition, and division, becomes the enemy of God, and is serving the devil and not God! **[Reread this.]**

“In order that this ONENESS—this UNITY of purpose and action—this HARMONY and co-operative teamwork, be maintained and preserved in GOD'S WORK, God has ordained GOVERNMENT IN HIS CHURCH. And He has empowered His Church with DIVINE AUTHORITY.

“That government in God's Church is government from God, thru Christ, thru apostles, thru evangelists, thru pastors, thru other elders, *in that order!*”

“*Must God's Ministers Be Ordained by the Hand of Man?*”,
Good News, October 1962

“UNTIL about 1969 we in God's Church *did* all ‘speak the same thing.’ By 1978 many of the ministers were speaking *different* things! God had withdrawn from us His blessing and power that for 35 YEARS caused the Work of His Church to grow at the approximate rate of 30 percent every year over the preceding year!

“WHAT CAUSED GOD TO WITHDRAW HIS BLESSING AND POWER?”

“Precisely the same thing that choked the growth of the Church of God at Corinth from A.D. 56, 25 years after the Church was founded at

Jerusalem. They were following different leaders, speaking different things, watering down the sacred and precious truths of Christ!

“Christ’s apostle wrote to the Corinthian church, in A.D. 56, ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment’ (I Corinthians 1:10).

“They were starting to follow different leaders teaching different doctrines. The Church was becoming divided! And a church divided against itself cannot stand!”

“It is only common sense to realize that if everyone teaches what he, personally, believes, or if we follow different leaders each speaking his own thing, WE HAVE ONLY CONFUSION!”

“*But the self-minded among us, even...in the ministry, do not understand!*” [Do you?]

“*Christ Sets Church Back on Track Doctrinally,*”
Good News, April 1979

“But it is still true that two can’t walk together except they be agreed. I am agreed with God and with Christ the Head of the Church. I shall never water down the TRUTH He has revealed to me, nor in any manner compromise with it. We are ALL OF US going to have to AGREE with God and with Christ HIS Son, if we are to walk together with them, into God’s Kingdom.”

“*Reports About Garner Ted False,*”
Worldwide News, March 6, 1981

How Mr. Armstrong Connects Laodicea

Next, Mr. Armstrong connects the *Laodicean condition* to the watering down of the truth as a whole. At the same time, he also answers any who would consider compromising, even slightly, with God’s truth. And it is the disagreement on what is truth that creates so many organizations and groups.

Understand that it is this disagreement that will not permit them to walk together. The problem began when they left the *standard* of what God’s Church taught—among these departures one of or the greatest being WHAT IS THE CHURCH:

“It is now clearly evident that God brought me back for a vital purpose by CPR from death by heart failure. Had I remained dead, the

Church of the living God would have been virtually destroyed by the liberal element that had crept in..."

"I want you, brethren, to think about and *understand* what happened to God's Church in the 1970s *lest history repeat itself!* I want you to see the 'fruits' of rebelling against God's way and God's government." **[History *did* repeat itself. Notice that liberalizing doctrine is tied to rebellion. This is tied to loss of good fruits. The Restored Church of God sees no such loss.]**

"Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God," Worldwide News, June 24, 1985

"The...Court...has now removed the Receiver, but the lawsuit is not over."

"We need to ask seriously, WHY is God allowing [this trial]? I can answer that. Our people of this 'Philadelphia' era were becoming lukewarm, drifting little by little into the ways of this world. Even some ministers were 'watering down' the truths and doctrines a loving Christ had put into His Church.

"We need a real EXPLOSION **[think of events like the 2010-11 UCG/COGwa split]** to wake us up!"

Brethren Letter, Feb. 24, 1979

"The Church was being turned upside down. It seemed to be a matter of going as far as possible in the ways and beliefs of this world's 'Christianity' as influenced by Satan—which amounts to going as far as possible into Satan's ways and AWAY FROM GOD'S WAYS!

"The HARM that was done as a result of this attitude to GOD'S CHURCH is *INCALCULABLE!* It harmed...thousands of members of the Church of the living GOD. It led to lukewarmness, a more careless attitude toward real or strict obedience to the ways of God."

*"Reports About Garner Ted False,"
Worldwide News, March 6, 1981*

"...Brethren, I won't compromise. If you want to compromise, go join one of these factions that have gone off from us, that are liberal...if you want to go Satan's way instead of God's way and pretend that you'll be in the kingdom of God—pretend you are in God's Church..."

Sermon, First Day of Unleavened Bread, April 16, 1985

"This man was on a program of watering down GOD'S TRUTH while I was on the other side of the earth (and without my knowledge).

“God’s Church will NOT COMPROMISE a millionth part of 1% with GOD’S TRUTH as He reveals it to us who willingly accept it—hunger and thirst for it! When a program of watering down starts, it grows with increasing momentum.”

Brethren/Co-Worker Letter, November 28, 1978

Read the next statement from Mr. Armstrong with the splinter leaders—*your* leader and *your* pastor—in mind:

“Are some of you trying to be more kind, merciful and considerate even than GOD? Are we actually disobeying God in our soft, fence-straddling approach toward certain others?”

“Now we COMMAND YOU, brethren, that ye withdraw yourselves from every *brother* that walketh disorderly,’ and, ‘if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have *no company* with him...’ (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14).”

“God is far more strict in all such matters within the Church than we have sometimes been inclined to be.”

“We MUST NOT appear to try to be more kind than God. Christ will say, ‘Depart from me!’ WE MUST NOT COMPROMISE! GOD DOES NOT!” **[Think of this in the correct light: Christ will in effect say to all who would not break off these wrong associations, “You made your choice. Because you would not depart from false leaders—depart from Me.”]**

“I do pray for all such. I pray that God will BLESS THEM—with whatever He in His supreme wisdom knows is BEST FOR THEM—even though that may be severe PUNISHMENT!”

“Can We Fellowship the Disfellowshipped?”,
Worldwide News, May 4, 1981

There are many similar statements from Mr. Armstrong, also equally powerful. Space prohibits their inclusion because most of them are very long and thorough. These cited are sufficient for those of sincere and honest thinking.

“Would Start Over”

Years ago, Mr. Armstrong gave me a personal admonition. He told me directly, face-to-face, “If false leaders ever take control of the Church, I hope you won’t teach their false ideas.” Many long-time ministers can remember him making similar statements openly, more than once, in

conferences beginning back in the 1950s and 60s. He would say words to this effect: “If you men ever get rid of me, Loma and I will just walk across the street and start over.” This is still public record. Of course, had this been necessary, he would have taken the *full* truth with him, and the true Church and *Body of Christ* would have automatically followed and transferred at the same time! Now a government summary statement from Mr. Armstrong:

“After all, the basic issue all along was that of God’s government in the Church. One who followed one liberal who, as the apostle Paul predicted, sought to draw away followers after himself (Acts 20:30) said, ‘We are liberated from that church government and now have a loosely knit organization, and that’s the way we like it.’”

“The Church is ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord’ (Ephesians 2:20-21). Note, the Church is organized and fitly framed together, not organized with competing and differing *branches*.”

“Notice Ephesians 4, there is only one organized church ‘fitly joined together and compacted’ (verse 16)—compacted as if welded together into one well-organized body. And how did He organize this body? How was it governed? ‘And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith... (Ephesians 4:11-13). It is not DISunity or some other type of organization and government. Paul also said ‘that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment’ (I Corinthians 1:10).”

“To make clear one of the reasons—if not the primary reason—for the conflict caused by the liberal element, I quote from a Western newspaper. In an interview with a former minister, who had sought to draw away a following of members after himself, it was stated concerning this split-off church that they have ‘a *completely different administrative structure*.’ **[By now you should understand that this departure summarizes the government problem in all of the splinters and slivers.]**

“Most...dissension of the past in the Church has been over...government. The dissenters believe in a very liberal government—the way of Satan and his world.”

“We who remain in the one and only true Church grieve over the loss of those who are so far failing in their final exams.”

*“Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the WCG,”
Worldwide News, June 24, 1985*

Again, it has been absolutely necessary to bring in the subject of government because it is inseparable from the Bible teaching of one unified Church. (The book that should be read after this one and “*Anoint Your Eyes*” is *The Government of God – Understanding Offices and Duties*. It is an extraordinarily detailed textbook on not only everything that Mr. Armstrong taught about God’s government in the Church, but also how his teaching aligned perfectly with the Bible. Focusing for a moment on UCG and COGwa, if every minister and member there read *just this book* with an open mind, and led of God’s Spirit, those entire organizations would disappear!)

For the final *series* of proofs of what is the true Church and what is the Body of Christ, we go to the Bible. The picture is bigger and more fascinating than you have imagined.

PLAIN BIBLE TRUTH

We have seen that men have their own differing definitions of what the Church actually *is*—and these statements could be listed almost without end—but only the Bible definition—*God’s* definition—matters. Of course, for those who accept the weight of Mr. Armstrong’s words, recognizing that he based every statement on the Bible, we might say the matter has already been settled. The reader either believes Mr. Armstrong was honest and correct with the many scriptures he quoted in just the few quotes we read or he does not. In any event, we must take the time to look much more closely at what the Bible teaches—beyond what a few quotes could demonstrate.

Now comes the most crucial chapter of the book. We will examine many verses—Old Testament and New—proving there could be, and always has been, only one Church. We will start with the clearest passages. All with an open mind will understand from plain Bible passages that Christ’s Church will not—and *cannot!*—be divided. As you read, *determine* to equip yourself with this ALL-IMPORTANT TRUTH. Take an *active* approach—*think* about what you are reading!

There are *many* verses—PLAIN STATEMENTS FROM GOD!—making absolutely clear that Christ built—constructed—only one unified organization—you will see to be one “House of God” and “Temple of the Lord.” Understand there will be necessary overlap with what we saw Mr. Armstrong taught. But he taught *from the Bible*. A chapter revealing the same truths would be similar. In fact, the Bible’s very *authority* is at stake.

Simple Definition

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "...that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the *house of God*, which is the *church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). In the end, no other definition, devised by men, is acceptable. This definition of the Church that Christ built will guide us throughout the remainder of this chapter. The point is that the Church of God has and teaches "the truth."

This world's churches are in confusion, divided by endless disagreement over doctrine, practice and personality. Amos 3:3 asks, "Can two *walk together*, except they be *agreed*?" Of course not! One split after another in the splinters just over power and control—where the correction of false doctrines is often not even in the discussion—proves this.

This world's churches do not practice "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*" (Luke 4:4). Instead, since they follow the differing traditions of men, endless disagreements divide and produce more and more churches of *men*. These organizations do not "walk together," because they do not "agree"—with each other or with God! (We have seen this includes the definition of what is the New Testament Church.)

God's Church is different. Many New Testament passages show that the Church Christ built is *unified*—with all its members and congregations walking *together* in COMPLETE AGREEMENT with each other, and with God and Christ.

Extraordinary Oneness

An important point, demonstrating the unity to be seen in the true Church, emerges from Christ's prayer, on the night of His betrayal: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be *sanctified* [set apart] *through the truth*...That they *all* may be ONE; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be ONE *in Us*: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, *even as We are ONE*: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made *perfect in ONE*; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me" (John 17:19, 21-23).

This forms a series of powerful statements! Christ intended His Church be "one" *no less than were He and His Father*! There is no room for disagreement in a Church *this* unified. These verses describe a *per-*

fect oneness through the truth—the *same* kind of oneness the Father and Christ enjoy. It is *this* kind of unity that allows true Christians to be “in” them—in Christ and in the Father (vs. 21).

God wanted even the Old Testament Church in the wilderness to reflect the same oneness that Christ prayed about regarding the New Testament Church. King David recorded, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for *brethren to dwell together in unity*” (Psa. 133:1). Ancient Israel never achieved this, but it was God’s intent from the beginning.

I Corinthians 12—One Body!

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that the Church has many members (individual brethren), and that this is likened to various parts of the human body, in that these members are *connected*. But you will see that this is really a picture of *Christ’s Body*, not merely a *human* body.

A careful study of I Corinthians 12 brings extraordinary understanding. Verses 12 to 14 state, “For as the body is ONE, and has *many members*, and all the members of that ONE body, being many, are ONE body: so also is Christ. For by ONE *Spirit* are we all baptized into ONE body...For the body is not one member, but many.”

So then, exactly what is the “one” Church or Body into which a person has been baptized? When Jesus walked the earth, His preaching of the gospel and other teachings, and all miracles and works He did, were done through and from His *physical* body. Of course, after crucifixion and burial, Christ’s Body was later resurrected as Spirit, before ascending to heaven, requiring that His work and preaching be transferred to another entity, His Church—which Scripture makes plain that Jesus Christ still considers to be His “Body” continuing on Earth what He started.

A brief portion of a quote from Mr. Armstrong returns to clarify this:

“God *started* His Gospel WORK—proclaiming the Gospel (good news) of HIS KINGDOM—through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after His resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, and thereafter, to enter into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those constituting GOD’S CHURCH.

“The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God’s Spirit, to carry on GOD’S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!”

“*Personal,*” *Good News, August 1983*

The context of I Corinthians 12 uses the analogy of hands, feet, eyes, ears and the mouth to show how different parts of a *human* body (Christ's body was once human) are connected within the same person. Paul continues, "But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they *many members*, yet but one body" (vs. 18-20).

Let's further understand what this means. You saw the "Christian" world teaches that Jesus' Church consists of many denominations, fellowships or communities of believers, all connected by the Holy Spirit working in believers wherever they are affiliated. But you are already seeing reasons proving this is totally contrary to what the Bible teaches. Here is more about why.

I Corinthians 12 *cannot be "spiritualized away" by human reasoning*. This chapter cannot be describing the kind of amorphous, disconnected, "spiritual" body of disagreeing people and organizations throughout professing Christianity. Any foot, eye or ear taken from a human body *dies!* No severed human body part can live long without blood supply and the connective tissue necessary to secure it to the body. God created the human body—He understands the analogy that He inspired. Everyone knows that a dismembered human body is one in *pieces*. How can brethren (splinter members) believe that *Christ's Body* can be dis"member"ed yet somehow still be *together?*

The physical-spiritual parallel is unmistakable.

All body parts *respond to the head*. They cannot be dysfunctional or spastic. The entire nervous system, led by the brain, must be in working order, operating with coordination. A human being cannot live without his or her body, with all of its parts, connected to and governed by the head! There is only one member that cannot be reattached if cut off—the head! (Notice that Paul listed the head as a member.) All bodies without heads die. If the *spiritual* Head (Christ) is severed from His Body, the *Church* will die! The splinters are works of men. Being outwardly attractive (to the superficial viewer) does not make Christ their Head. Having cut Christ—the Head—off, they are *governments and churches of men*, teaching many doctrines of men. You are learning about one of the biggest.

Why have so many seemingly forgotten the entirety of (and simplicity within) I Corinthians 12, which is basically a 31-verse explanation comparing the *physical* human body—and all of its *connected* parts (eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, etc.)—to the *spiritual* Body of Christ? It is because plain meaning has been "spiritualized away" by most brethren. The obvious meaning intended is that *any* part of the body (the physical

human body or Christ's spiritual Body) will *die* if severed away—no longer *connected* in its God-designed place.

The End of the Matter

All speculation about God's intended meaning in I Corinthians 12 abruptly ends in the middle of verse 24. Notice: "God has *tempered the body together*, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be *no schism* in the body" (vs. 24-25). Think. The Greek word that is translated *schism* could also be translated "division," "split" or "gap." Also, *tempered together* means "co-mingle," "combine" and "mix with." The honest Bible student finds not an inch of room in this passage for multiple organizations and groups—or even two organizations.

Mr. Armstrong got it right.

The Church once understood that it was the *Protestants* who "spiritualize away" plain scriptures regarding God's Law, Sabbath, Holy Days, tithing, unclean meats, etc. Why do thousands of God's people now do the same thing—or permit their leaders to do it? How could they miss the lesson of what the apostates did time and again—causing such disruption in their lives? How could they so quickly forget how scores of thousands of brethren suffered and how the Work of God was temporarily destroyed because of such dishonesty with God's Word? If this describes you, will you admit it?

Consider again two scriptures that opened Chapter One: "He [Christ] is the head of the body, *the Church*" (Col. 1:18), and "[God] gave Him [Christ] to be the Head over all things to *the Church*, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22-23). The *Body of Christ* is *the Church*, and vice versa! Therefore, I Corinthians 12 qualifies both terms. The manifest integration of the human body makes clear that *all parts* work together in God's Church!

Ponder this. Those claiming that Christ's Body is scattered in different groups imply Christ lacks the *power*—is too impotent—to keep His efforts united. Conversely, this suggests that men and/or the devil can block or destroy the unity that Christ intends—and that He is powerless to do anything about it!

"The Gates of the Grave"

Let's review Matthew 16:18 one more time. Some overlap from earlier is necessary while we draw certain conclusions. Jesus promised His

disciples that, “The gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against [the Church].” I first heard of that promise 45 years ago. I believed it then—and still do!

Be honest! If the devil could enter and destroy the Church’s *government* (the government of God)—I am not speaking of *corporate* governance—the only means and structure of authority and power by which Christ guides His Body and Work—he has destroyed the Church! Admit this to yourself. All that Satan really must do is convince God’s people, through a series of clever, seductive arguments from his agents, that God’s government as they knew it is no more. When this is accomplished, he has effectively removed the ability of God’s people to remain together, to practice teamwork and to continue the Work of God in larger form *together*.

This would mean the devil holds power sufficient to defeat the purpose of the Church!—to defeat what is seen to be one of the very greatest promises in all of the Bible!

Do you believe that possible? If so, then you believe the gates of hell *can* prevail against the Church. You also believe that when Christ said to the apostles that He would be “with [them] always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20), He had some *other meaning* in mind than what the Church always thought was the *obvious one*. This was said in the context of Christ’s own authority, and how power and authority were to be given to the apostles. He explained to them that the Father had given Him all power, and that He would give it *to them* in order that they could baptize and teach all things to all nations. Is the devil’s power greater than the power of God?

I ask again: Do you believe that the living Jesus Christ—the same Person who made 30 billion trillion stars (the new estimate recently announced)!—can be pushed from leadership over His Church and Body by men, or by the devil? In fact, prophecy reveals that it is Satan who will soon be removed from his throne, with this to occur at the same time all rule, power and authority of men is put down *by Christ* and the saints.

Why do—how could—so many forget the power and authority—and certainty!—of Christ and His government?

Hypothetical Thinking

It is time for humor. Think of Christ, in heaven, as another organization splits away from any particular “true Church.” Imagine His position: “Oh no, men have started another true Church! I am now the Head of

another organization not of My choosing. My Work has been *further* diffused. My people have been *further* divided. Oh well, let's see what My new 'true Church' teaches. And let's see what is the structure of government that has been chosen on My behalf. I also need to know what doctrines are being taught in My name to see what I have become the Head of." This is the position in which blind, foolish men seem willing to put *their* "Jesus." The body of "another Jesus," who is one with another god (II Cor. 4:4), would of course happily do this as often as possible. This is commonly called Christendom.

Does the *true* Jesus Christ follow or *lead*?

Do you see the UTTERLY LUDICROUS position of rebellious, fighting, competing ministers—and that they think the ALL-POWERFUL, LIVING JESUS CHRIST permits them to do this with impunity? If Elijah could mock the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:27), I can certainly mock the thinking of such DIVISIVE IMPOSTORS leading the splinters. How do they *dare* so trample the truth of the Jesus Christ they profess to serve? How do they live with themselves? How do they sleep at night? How can they handle the Word of God SO DISHONESTLY? And where do they find the gall to ask God's people to buy into their thinking?

Worse, how do so many brethren let them get away with it?

Perfect Unity

In chapter 4 of Ephesians, Paul went on to admonish the brethren there to be "Endeavoring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the *bond of peace*. There is ONE BODY [Church], and ONE *Spirit*, even as you are called in ONE *hope* of your calling; ONE *Lord*, ONE *faith*, ONE *baptism*, ONE *God and Father*" (3-6).

There is no confusing the all-encompassing unity and agreement this verse requires of God's people. It mirrors Christ's John 17 prayer for the absolute oneness that He and the Father enjoy. We might ask: If the Father and Christ were on Earth, would they attend two different churches, teaching different things—but paper over it by declaring that they were connected amorphously "through the Holy Spirit" in some kind of incomprehensible "oneness"?

Such silly questions and faulty reasoning can be helpful in seeing the false logic that YOUR LEADERS bring to even the PLAINEST SCRIPTURES. But there is more.

A few verses later, Paul described the crucial role of a faithful ministry, actively working with and teaching Christ's Church. Comprehend this lengthy passage:

“He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the *perfecting of the saints*, for the work of the ministry, for the *edifying of the* body of Christ: till we all come in the *unity* of the *faith*, and of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the *fullness of Christ*: that we henceforth be *no more children, tossed to and fro*, and carried about with *every wind of doctrine*, by the *sleight of men*, and *cunning craftiness*, whereby they lie in wait to DECEIVE; but speaking the TRUTH *in love*, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the WHOLE BODY *fitly joined together* and *compact*ed by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part*, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:11-16).

This block of Scripture pictures the Body as unified in both *doctrinal truth* and *love*. Phrase after phrase demonstrates that the *entire* Church (“*whole body*” and “*every part*”) must be walking *together* in *complete* agreement under Christ’s authority. Notice that He uses His ministers—*true* ministers!—to keep His Church from drifting into “every wind of doctrine.” I am seeking to do this now for those who care.

If you do *not* accept what Jesus Christ, as Head of the Church, inspired Paul to record, you are effectively “putting words” in Christ’s mouth. You have Him saying, “You must throw out all the analogies I use to assist in understanding what I am talking about. None of them actually mean what they appear to say. They are just the best I can think of. ‘Body’ doesn’t mean ‘Body,’ nor do My terms ‘knit together,’ ‘framed together,’ ‘tempered together,’ ‘compact,’ ‘no schisms’ and ‘no divisions’ mean what you might say is obvious. I have something entirely different in mind from what I appear to mean in every case—I just don’t know how best to say it.”

Jesus Christ is the “Logos”—the Father’s *Spokesman* for all matters within His Plan. Think of what your leaders have done with Jesus Christ’s plain teaching. They have effectively reduced the Being who made the sun, moon and stars into an utterly incompetent communicator on even the most vitally important subjects—those that must not be misunderstood!

Do you believe them?

Temple of the Lord

The subject of Christ’s Body is incomplete until another vital connection is made. The New Testament Church and Body are also called the

“Temple of the Lord.” A number of passages make this plain—and you *must* understand their meaning.

The magnificent Old Testament Temple (built by Solomon, later rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and afterwards renovated by Herod) was where God dwelled. All Israel knew this. This Temple was often referred to as the “House of the Lord.” You will see that the New Testament uses the same terms.

The term “temple” is found in a host of contexts throughout the New Testament. This word appears literally scores of times through the gospels and epistles of Paul, as well as in various places in the book of Revelation, usually there referring to the Temple around God’s throne in the third heaven.

Briefly, the English word translated “temple” generally derives from three separate Greek words that can correctly be translated as “temple.” These are *oikos* (oy’ kos): “a dwelling, by implication a family home, household or temple”—*hieron* (hee-er-on’): “a sacred place, that is, the entire precincts of the temple (at Jerusalem or elsewhere)”—and *naos* (nah-os’): “a feign shrined temple—the central sanctuary itself.”

An examination of where these different words are used is its own interesting study. However, certain straightforward passages make very plain what—more correctly, *who*—is the Temple of God today.

Fundamental Passages

John 2:19-21 is the place to start. It offers important proof that the Body of Christ is the same as the Temple of God. As you read, realize Jesus’ words are the Bible interpreting the Bible, and they provide the best introduction to the *New Testament Temple*. Note especially the final part of the passage: “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy *this temple*, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building [they thought He meant the renovated second temple built after Solomon’s had been destroyed], and will You rear it up in three days? But He spoke of *the temple of His body*.”

If you understand that Christ’s “Body” is also His “Temple”—and that the “Temple” is “His Body”—obviously the same as the “Body of Christ”—you cannot get confused. All you must do is take Jesus’ words at face value. The Bible will continue interpreting itself.

Paul recorded much more than any other Bible writer about the *New Testament Temple*. First is his foundational statement in Ephesians: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the *household of God*; and are built upon the

foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the BUILDING *fitly framed together* grows unto an holy TEMPLE IN THE LORD” (2:19-21).

He added this to the Corinthians: “For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s BUILDING” (I Cor. 3:9).

Note this. Unlike the custom of today’s English, the King James translators carefully used “ye” whenever the intent was plural and “you” when it was singular. The ye in each case references all of the Ephesians and all of the Corinthians—and thus means the whole Church, collectively. It will become clearer as we proceed that individual members are not the Temple of God, but rather the entire Church as a whole constitutes it. Of course, this is not new.

We will later come to understand *how* the Bible describes—the specific term that it uses for—individuals *within* that Temple. The supreme importance of serving God in the manner and in the place that He requires cannot be overstressed.

A few verses later in I Corinthians 3, Paul added this: “Know ye not that ye are the TEMPLE OF GOD, and that the Spirit of God dwells in ye? If any man defile the TEMPLE OF GOD, him shall God destroy; for the TEMPLE OF GOD is holy, *which* TEMPLE ye are” (vs. 16-17).

Together, these verses reveal that God sees His people—the true Church—as both His *Building* and His *Temple*. Understand that God is *building* a Temple—or a “House” (seen momentarily). Almost identical, I Corinthians 6:19 does add a little more, these verses together making clear how serious it is if those called of God treat lightly the awesome privilege of having God dwell in them.

The second epistle to Corinth adds significantly more understanding. Let’s notice: “What agreement has the TEMPLE OF GOD with idols? For ye [the plural is used throughout] are the TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD [incidentally, in light of LCG’s name, note the emphasis again this time on the “living God” not the living “temple].” Paul continues, “. . .as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (6:16).

The last part of this passage comes from Leviticus 26:12. Its use here demonstrates God has *always* planned—“has said” from the beginning—that His Church, those in whom He would in the future *personally dwell*, would be the greatest Temple of all. Recognize that Leviticus was recorded long before either Solomon’s or Zerubbabel’s Temple was built.

There is a powerful message for everyone in the verses leading up to II Corinthians 6:16, quoted above. For those desiring to be in God’s Temple, there exists no room—none!—for doctrinal compromise with

the false, pagan teachings of counterfeit Christianity—summarized as “unrighteousness” and “darkness” in verse 14. Christians are to “touch not the unclean thing” (vs. 17)—*anything* that is sin. This would certainly include the false, Protestant “Body of Christ” doctrine, and even more so since this teaching also perverts what the New Testament *Temple* is.

Pause to read verses 14 and 15. Then take time to read each phrase in Ephesians 5:6-11, followed by verses 23 and 30. The first group of verses condemn *all* compromise with *every* form of unrighteousness. The latter tie Christ as Head of “the Church” to those in it being what He calls—read carefully!—“members of *His Body*, of *His flesh*, and of *His bones*.”

Let this understanding of exactly what it means to be in the Body of Christ SOBER YOU!

“HOUSE of God”

A final proof (there are several others) that the *Church of God*, the biblical *Body of Christ* and the *Temple* or *House of God* are the exact same thing is understood by comparing three more passages in Paul’s epistles. Follow what they connect. Do not miss what God reveals!

We begin by revisiting I Timothy 3:15. This crucial but largely ignored bedrock passage provides the New Testament definition of the true Church of God. Notice the Church is there called “the *house* of God... the *Church* of the living God, the pillar and ground of the TRUTH.” (Take more than a passing interest that this verse ties the Church to where “*the truth*” is—not “*some* of the truth” or “*much* of the truth” or even “*most* of the truth”—and certainly not “truth *mixed with error*”—but rather simply “THE TRUTH”!) Now pause and read John 4:23-24!

Then, get clear in your mind that the Church is called “the HOUSE of God.” (It is more than interesting that this is the same term used from the beginning regarding Solomon’s Temple, generally in the Old Testament referred to as the “House of the Lord,” or “God’s House,” as in I Kings 6:37-38.)

Recall Jesus taught in Matthew that “a HOUSE divided...cannot stand” (12:25). Why do those who teach the New Testament Church is scattered among many organizations never reference this verse? Christ went on to explain that even the devil realizes *his* “kingdom” cannot survive divided.

Surely Christ is at least as wise as the devil. He would not have a *lower standard* of unity than THE DEVIL! The splinters, however, *are* divided due to many doctrinal errors. But where Christ is working, it is *not* divided by different beliefs (I Cor. 1:10-11). Grasp this! (More later on Matthew 12:25.)

Recall that Paul called the Temple of the Lord a “BUILDING *fitly framed together*” (Eph. 2:19-21). Here is the point not to be missed. Two chapters later he said the identical thing about the *Body of Christ*. Notice: “From whom the WHOLE BODY *fitly joined together and compacted* [we saw I Corinthians 12:24 adds “*tempered...together*”] by that which *every joint* supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part...*” (Eph. 4:16).

The Greek—Fascinating Meaning

The phrases “*fitly framed together*” and “*fitly joined together*” are translated from the same Greek word *sunarmologeō*. It means “to render close-jointed together, i.e. organized compactly, be fitly framed (joined) together (in the sense of laying).” Paul obviously had the same thing in mind whether discussing the Church, the Temple (or House of God) or the Body of Christ.

Sunarmologeō offers truly fascinating meaning. The beginning and last portions of the definition—“render *close-jointed*” and “*together* (in the sense of laying)” —carry the obvious meaning of laying individual stones that are mortared or put “close-jointed” beside each other (“together”) as one would lay them in rows within a building.

Since we saw that the Temple of the Lord is also called God’s “building,” there is no possible way to read these passages and conclude that the true Church could be anything other than *one undivided organization*—a SINGLE BUILDING! Do not let anyone tell you that God’s Temple is less than this! Christ’s Building cannot be “spiritualized away” any more than can His Body.

“Living Stones”

Now let’s look more closely at what are the “stones” used in building—exactly what or who it is that lies together “close-jointed.” At this point the knowledge presented becomes personal. The apostle Peter put an exclamation point—a capstone!—on all that Paul wrote about the New Testament Temple.

God declares this to true Christians through the ages: “If so be ye [plural again] have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To Whom coming, as unto a LIVING STONE [Christ], disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as LIVELY [living] STONES, are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, *an holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the

scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded” (I Pet. 2:3-6).

It becomes easy to understand now that the *living stones* (Christ being the Chief Corner Stone) are individual Christians in the Temple lying “close-jointed”—“fitly framed TOGETHER.” Think of how wonderfully close the stones in Solomon’s Temple were, and the message in their settings. And note that it was only the priests who could enter and serve in the Temple (II Chron. 23:6). Finally, note that I Peter 2:5 should carry the stronger rendering of the POSITIVE COMMAND “*be ye* [BE YE!] also *living stones*,” as in many Bible margins.

This is incredible understanding, for those able to receive it. Does the description of living stones closely framed together sound like people attending a host of different churches with different beliefs? In contrast to Peter and Paul’s description, do not the splinters look more like pictures of buildings reduced to rubble—piles of bricks—in German cities after WWII Allied bombers had finished with them?

Dead Stones

Peter wrote more, and our understanding cannot be complete without it: “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed [or “rejected”], the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye [the Church] are *a* chosen generation, *a* royal priesthood, *an* holy nation, *a* peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (vs. 7-9).

The world has never been willing to accept the *true* Jesus Christ! Neither will they accept the Church He built—and is still building. They “stumble” at His doctrines, and reject—“disallow”—Him as the Head of the Church—meaning the churches *they* build. In His place they bring a cold, *dead Jesus* (“another Jesus”) on a cross, who brings *dead understanding* (empty pagan doctrines), and who builds *dead churches* out of *dead stones*!

Most will not hold precious the true Jesus Christ of the Bible. Neither will they hold to His teachings (of course, most will not even *study* them). They will not yield to His government. Neither will they come to His Church, nor support the Work of that Church. And they will not permit Him to head their lives—and build them into His House. Blind to their actions, they keep themselves *outside the Temple* He is constructing.

All mankind has unwittingly chosen *not* to be placed next to the “living stones” with which God builds. (My thorough book *The True Jesus Christ – Unknown to Christianity* is worth your reading. It will change you forever.)

God’s “House” is the same as His “Temple”—of which you were called to be a “living stone,” one “closely joined” with all the others in God’s *unified* “Building.” Why are brethren not willing to accept that God’s Church—the Body of Christ—His House or Temple—is so obviously ONE ORGANIZATION ruled by Jesus Christ as Head under the government of God—and doing His Work?

Dying Stones—Half Dead, Half Alive

What could be more important to understand than these points? What could be more important than allowing yourself to be placed by Christ into the Temple—into the very “House of God”? What could be more important to you than recapturing the basic, but all-important, knowledge that, “Except *the* LORD *build* the HOUSE, they labor in vain that build it” (Psa. 127:1)? There is but one House God could have had in mind in this passage—the one He planned long before the Psalms were recorded. (Recall Leviticus 26:12.)

Regarding the churches of men—the splinters—how could their founders think they could build their own “houses” and that Christ would submit to their lead, and follow them, instead of the other way around?

And how could so many thousands blindly help them build?

The majority today have made themselves “branches cut off” from the true Christ—not YET dead in most cases, but rather having made themselves DYING stones, stones with the “oil” of God’s Spirit flowing out of their “lamps” (Matt. 25:1-12). “Branches” cut from the “Vine”—stones taken from the Builder—God’s Spirit is not being replenished in them! How long before it is gone—and gone from you?

Tragically, most simply no longer seem able to even *remember* that Philadelphians are promised to be “pillar[s] *in* the [coming] Temple of... God” (Rev. 3:12).

How did all this incredible knowledge get lost to thousands?

One Nation

There is a reason Peter called God’s Church “*a* chosen generation, *a* royal priesthood, *an* holy nation, *a* peculiar people.” The four phrases in this verse are in the singular—meaning *one*, not several, of each term

referenced. If a nation is split into several nations, no one would consider it to be *a* (single) nation—it would be multiple nations, not “a” nation. The same is true of God’s Church.

There is but ONE!

Consider further. The Church is referred to as (spiritual) Israel. In the Old Testament, Israel was a nation. Did anyone doubt that ancient Israel was *one* nation, with *one* civil authority and *one* set of laws and teachings? One could not move to Syria and still be in the nation of Israel. One could not live in Egypt and be *in* Israel. You have to live in Israel to be in Israel. All understand what “a” nation means. Israel consisted of twelve tribes, but they were all under one government, one judge, one high priest, one king, etc.

Also notice Exodus 19:5-6. It demonstrates God’s intention from the beginning: “If you [Israel] will obey My voice...and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me [Peter used “a peculiar people”] above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests [Peter used “a royal priesthood”].” God knew Israel would rebel so He had to build a *spiritual* nation—the one true Church. Understand the connection.

Houses Divided

Christ Himself taught about the importance of unity in His House. Let’s expand on a scripture we referenced earlier: “Every *kingdom* divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every *city* or *HOUSE* *divided* against itself *shall not stand* [survive]” (Matt. 12:25). I repeat from earlier, surely the great God of heaven and Jesus Christ are as wise as the devil.

Can a divided marriage continue indefinitely? Could even the most powerful company survive if its board of directors were divided? Could a winning professional football or soccer team survive if the coach continually challenged and opposed decisions, policies and judgments of the team’s corporate leadership, or ownership? Could a school survive if every decision made by the principal was challenged by senior teachers on the faculty, and groups of teachers regularly broke away from the school to form more (unauthorized) schools?

Certainly not! Why, then, do God’s people accept the idea that the most important organization on Earth—the Church of God—can be divided into endless squabbling groups? How long could God’s people survive in a state that married couples, companies, sports teams or schools could not endure—and would not be foolish enough to *think* they could?

We are again left to accept that “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Luke 16:8).

Jesus tells you, “Abide in Me...as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in Me...*without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:4-5).

Do not miss what is at stake regarding which church you are part of.

The Acts 2 Picture

Let’s examine just a few verses to see *why* Mr. Armstrong taught that God only works in one House—one organization. You will see that he was honest with God’s Word. His previous statements reference some of these passages.

Acts 2 records Jesus fulfilling His promise to build His Church. This account of its birth offers extraordinary insight into what it was to look like for the next 2,000 years.

Verse 1 records that “they were all with *one accord* in ONE PLACE.” The first thing that happened after 3,000 were baptized: “They continued steadfastly in *the apostles’ doctrine* and *fellowship*, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (vs. 42).

Two points emerge. People held to—“continued in”—the “APOSTLES’ doctrine,” not anybody else’s. This statement is enormous—and one of the greatest reasons Mr. Armstrong understood that truth *only* comes into the Church through apostles. (Also remember Ephesians 2:20.) This doctrine includes understanding what is the Church!

Another monumental point is introduced here—the people also “*continued...in...fellowship*” *together*. Verse 44 states, “And all that believed were *together...*” The Church was *together*! This is the only way the rest of the verse could state that they “had all things common.” Try applying this to multiple organizations.

Verse 46 ties the knot: “And they, continuing daily with *one accord* in the temple, and breaking bread *from house to house*, did eat their meat with gladness and *singleness of heart*.” All were eating together in “one accord” and “singleness of heart.” This *would* produce the “gladness” spoken of here. Recall: “How good and how *pleasant* it is for brethren to *dwell together* in unity” (Psa. 133:1)! Satan knows this, and has convinced God’s people they can be divided and still be the true Church—and that Christ leads them as and where they are.

We have just reviewed the first snapshot of Christ’s Church. Is the picture coming even clearer—from the Old Testament and the New—and that the devil would necessarily paint a different picture for you?

Unbreakable Standard of Unity

Much can be learned by examining Paul's instructions to various other congregations he was overseeing. He continually stressed unity and oneness within the true Church.

The Corinthian congregation had many problems—including terrible division and disunity, some of it doctrinal and some because people were selecting “favorite ministers” and speakers. After just nine introductory verses, Paul cuts to the difficulty—and reveals the only way God's Church is to function: “I beseech you, brethren...that you all *speak the same thing*, and that there be *no divisions* among you; but that you be *perfectly joined together* in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*” (I Cor. 1:10).

In just this one verse, Paul was inspired to describe, in FIVE different ways, how all of God's people in every age should be completely unified and in agreement. This verse, with its obvious meaning, is another that cannot be “spiritualized away” by deceptive human reasoning. No honest mind can possibly draw any other conclusion from this passage. Do not miss the intent. Carefully reread the phrases in italics.

Where in this passage does Christ give license for multiple organizations—“churches”—to appear in His name? Where in this description is there room for hundreds of divided, competing groups, in disagreement over teachings and judgments—and diminished in the all-important impact of taking the gospel announcement of the kingdom of God to the world (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20)?

Nowhere!

It was in this same letter that Paul had to write, “God is not the author of *confusion*, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (I Cor. 14:33), followed by, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (vs. 40). I ask again, “Why?” Why have people forgotten such basic scriptures? Any definition of “decency” and “order” would be *impossible* if God's Church were divided into even a few competing organizations, let alone hundreds.

Verse 13 of I Corinthians 1 begins with the rhetorical question: “Is Christ divided?” The only reason it is not followed with the word “no” or something similar is because the answer is so obvious. Considering what he had just written, Paul knew the thrust of his question was like asking, “Is grass green?” or “Is the sky blue?” Rhetorical questions require no response because everyone knows the answer. “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” is left unanswered for the same reason.

Why can so many brethren no longer grasp such easy questions as “Is Christ divided?” Deep blindness—in the most basic points of spiritual understanding—has settled over the majority of Spirit-begotten people today. They must anoint their eyes as Christ commanded, or they will never see again.

We must ask: What is the ULTIMATE cause of this constant splitting and dividing taking place today?

“Not holding the Head”

The Corinthians were not the only congregation that had problems with how Christ leads the Church. So did the Colossians. This congregation had gone off track and back into other old doctrines and ideas, including “vain deceit,” “philosophy,” the “tradition of men” and the “rudiments of the world” (2:8, 20).

Why? What caused most of a congregation to go so far off?

Paul identified the problem—then and today. He told the Colossians they were “not holding the Head” (2:19), which is Jesus Christ and His leadership over the undivided “Body of Christ” (vs. 17). They were looking *outside* His government and Body, where He was “Head”—in the Colossians’ case to *angels* for instruction and leadership. Incidentally, if just this much of Colossians were understood—or *remembered* by God’s people—the so-called “difficult scripture” of chapter 2, verse 16 becomes very easy to understand. Read the whole context of what the Colossians forgot in order to see what practically the entire Worldwide Church of God also forgot.

The reason so many brethren and ministers *today* have seized for themselves rule of the “Church”—by first creating, and then picking, choosing and moving among many organizations—is because, having forgotten what the Church and government of God *look like*, they no longer “hold the Head”—the *true* Jesus Christ.

“Where is the Lord?”

Many today, not just the ministry, have become like those described in Jeremiah 2:8. This verse forms part of the background and setting of verse 31, which describes modernists in Israel who declare, “WE ARE LORDS; we will come no more unto You [God].” Verse 8 had said, “The priests [leaders] said not, *Where is the LORD?* And they that handle the law knew Me not: the *pastors* also transgressed against Me...and walked after things that do not profit.”

While this passage is primarily describing the ministers of this world, it has come to picture the thinking of so many brethren and former WCG ministers today—particularly the ministry, because it is they who “handle the law.” Yet, it also has a very real application to God’s people.

Obvious questions arise: Why are so few in the splinters (starting with *leading* ministers) willing to ask, “Where is Christ” at work? For instance, when the United Church of God split, did anyone hear a single public statement from even *one* of the hundreds of ministers (“priests”) there asking, “*Where is the LORD [the Head of the Church]?*” Why are so many unable to see that raising *this* question becomes the only way to find His Church and government? Why are thousands not out “moving heaven and earth” to find it? And, most important, why do so few seem to care? The answer lies in the fact that most people now consider THEMSELVES to be “lords”—“*We are lords,*” Jeremiah wrote. Why would anyone go looking for Christ—to “hold the Head”—when he sees the “lord” in the mirror every day?

Questions for your consideration.

Unity—Goal or Command?

Think about these scriptures in light of just some of the doctrinal points the splinters cannot agree on: whether Mr. Armstrong was an apostle, whether Church eras exist, whether God *has* a family or *is* a Family, whether Christians are “born again (from above)” at conversion and not at the Resurrection. How is God’s Church governed? Is Christ’s role part of the gospel of the kingdom of God? Division exists both between *and within* EVERY splinter.

Paul told the Philippians, “Stand fast in *one spirit*, with *one mind* striving *together* for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries” (1:27-28). And, “Be *likeminded*, having the *same love*, being of *one accord*, of *one mind*” (2:2). Complete unity is the only condition acceptable to God! Paul’s words appear as a COMMAND.

Paul told the Colossians to be “knit *together* in love, and...the *full assurance of understanding*,” and “rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, *as you have been taught*” (2:2, 7). He describes total unity, walking “together,” assured of right “understanding” they “have been taught” by trained and duly-appointed ministers—starting with an apostle! (We already saw how the Ephesian congregation was similarly admonished.)

So many in the splinters HAVE treated Church unity as merely a *goal*, not a biblical COMMAND. So many seem to say, “It’s regrettable the churches cannot be united. Unity is a wonderful principle—it is certainly

our goal—but it is just not possible today.” How sad what so many people lose out on because of such blind acceptance of their plight.

A Lesson Inside Disfellowshipping

The Roman congregation saw false doctrines creeping in. Paul instructed, “I beseech you, brethren, *mark* [take note of] them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary to the doctrine* which *you have learned*; and avoid them. For they...by good words and fair speeches *deceive* the hearts of the simple” (16:17-18).

This is strong language. It reintroduces the biblical doctrine of disfellowshipping those who slip into false doctrines, and seek to take others with them—to divide the Church. This principle demonstrates how important it is to God that His people not stray from the truth into “every wind of doctrine.”

Additional scriptures address and amplify this Bible principle. See Titus 3:10-11, I Corinthians 5:1-8 and I Timothy 6:1-5. Together, these passages represent a vital Bible doctrine that the true Church must practice to maintain unity. In addition to ignoring God’s instruction, churches that will not practice this instruction are full of division, discord and disagreement—which inevitably leads to splits within the church or congregation.

Fulfilling the instruction to disfellowship is neither abusive nor an act of hate! It is in fact a form of God’s *love* administered to people who have drifted into error—and is designed to wake them up. It also protects the remaining brethren. It requires a greater level of faith—that most find too difficult—to obey God’s instruction to protect the Church in this way. Persecution can result. However, obeying God yields the fruits of peace, joy and *unity*. “Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out” (Prov. 22:10). It is worth noting that most splinters today only disfellowship ministers who *reject error* to keep ESTABLISHED TRUTH. I know!

These are all *real* biblical principles—and seen to be COMMANDS, requiring authority to administer—that periodically had to be enforced in the Church in the past. But consider that if the Church is composed of many groups and organizations, with each administering its own distinct and separate authority, carrying out these actions with finality is *impossible*. So is correcting, admonishing or rebuking, when necessary—either members or ministers.

Here is why. Briefly mentioned earlier, the recipient of the disciplinary action can simply go elsewhere, to *any other* group or organization—another “true church”—and likely even be *welcomed*. And again, as is often the case today, he will probably be seen as a virtual “hero”

for having seen the light, the “wrong” of the “offending” organization (the other “true church”) that corrected, suspended or disfellowshipped him. In other words, if there are hundreds of “true churches,” it becomes *absolutely impossible* for the ministry to carry out God’s instruction to discipline those who need it. Those disciplined can always go to another, and then another, and then another “true church.”

But there is a related yet different problem having to do with which are the doctrines that must be *defended* and which are to be *rejected*. The ministry—and the brethren—must have a STANDARD of *true teaching* to discern who it is they must disfellowship or must avoid. This requires a SINGLE CENTRAL AUTHORITY (recall Mr. Armstrong’s quote) led of Christ to instruct in all true doctrine. Otherwise, each church would have its own standard, creating utter confusion.

The Church as Mother

Let’s go further with the above principle, remembering that one of the greatest responsibilities of the true Church of God is the *protection* of its members. The plain teaching of the Bible is that the true Church is the spiritual Mother to God’s people. Many important elements of God’s Plan flow from this knowledge. Mr. Armstrong knew and taught that the Church is the “Mother” of the begotten children of God within it. The serious reader will go to Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22-23, all of Revelation 12 and II John 1 and 5 to see this Mother described in various ways. She alone is given the charge—the solemn, God-ordained duty—to keep these children of God secure, safe from harm. How would any *human* mother accomplish this if her children could freely roam the neighborhood, picking, choosing and living with any *other* “mother” of choice?

Today, God’s people—His children—are roaming and wandering the streets of a town with 300 “homes” (the number of supposed “true churches” today, with ever more “moving into town”). It could be said that some are with foster mothers, others with adoptive mothers, still others with nannies and babysitters, some at daycare centers, and yet others with kidnapers. In fact, there are now an almost endless array of substitutes, counterfeits and surrogates “welcoming” and “rearing” God’s children.

Every mother knows her own children best, and how they differ from each other. Only the *true* mother will have a *mother’s* love for those children. Other “mothers” in the neighborhood are at best pretenders, none of whom will protect or care for her children in the same way *she* would. Some will quickly cut the child in two when the true mother would save it at all costs. (Ask Solomon about such mothers.) And only the *real* mother

of a child knows best when that child needs correction or discipline. She also knows her other children can be harmed if *one child* is left out of control. Sometimes that child must “be sent to his room” (isolation).

So it is with protecting the sheep in God’s Church through disciplinary action. The sheep are not permitted to pick and choose among shepherds that would protect them in whatever way they—the sheep!—think best. Nor can they pick another “nicer” mother when their own disciplines them. Yet, this would be the natural byproduct of administering any kind of correction, admonition, suspension, disfellowshipment or even marking when necessary today. In the present circumstances, the member “child” can merely declare, “I don’t like my mommy, I’m going to get another one because she spanked me.” This is translated, “I don’t like the way I was corrected (treated) by my organization, I’m going to find another ‘true church’ that will be willing to accept my conduct and my doctrinal ideas—one that will let me tell my mother how to ‘rear me.’” Worse, the first thing the “new mother” (the next “true church”) usually says is that the child was a victim of abuse, and “did the right thing” by coming to the new, more tolerant and understanding “true church.”

There is a final, critical *related* aspect of the mother/child analogy to be considered. The Church, like any human mother, is responsible for the *diet* of her children (in the Church’s case, the *spiritual* diet). She must work out a daily menu that ensures the *health* of her growing children. If children do not like the courses their mother serves, they do not have the option of picking a family that serves food to their liking. If a child does not want fruits, vegetables and grains—the typical child!—he cannot go where he will receive only candy and ice cream.

Jesus Christ would *never* permit His Church to be broken into 300 “homes,” all serving as different “mothers,” in which God’s children can roam, picking and choosing at will. This recognition becomes its own powerful PROOF that there has to be *one central authority*—THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD—within the one Church of God administering to the needs—protection, doctrine, discipline and diet—of the Church Christ built! Only the *true* Mother—the *ONE true* Church—is authorized by God to do these things!

Understand the many reasons you should not assign to anyone but your *true* Mother the task of feeding you. Inspired and empowered of God, she is the one most concerned with what you eat.

While we are close to asking if you will “obey the truth,” there are still some questions...

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The apostasy has raised many questions—but seemingly even a greater number of *wrong answers* to them presented by those who do not know what they are talking about. This section answers these basic questions, as well as others not often asked that *should* be. Recognize that in most cases what is written is but a synopsis of all that could be said.

Question 1: How can Christ have a *Philadelphian Church* and a *Laodicean Church*, and yet still lead only *one* true Church? Are not Laodiceans God’s people, too—are they not also His *true Church*?

The Greek word for “church” is *ekklesia*, which simply means “the called out ones.” So there are today *Philadelphian called out ones* and *Laodicean called out ones*. Laodiceans still have some of God’s Spirit (less every day—Matt. 25:8—until anointing their eyes) and do keep His Commandments (Rev. 12:17). They are, in fact, real brethren—they are still called out of the world. The problem is not their calling. It is that they have one foot in the truth and God’s Way, and one in the world—even after they return to God’s Church!

Remember again this most basic truth about the seventh and last era of God’s Church. The word *Laodicea* means “the people rule, judge and decide.” The problem with this final era is that Jesus Christ is no longer leading them (*any* of their “churches”). This is because people—ministers and members—and their organizations have rejected *His* form of government, and necessarily therefore the only way He defines *His*

Church. Having been betrayed by false leaders in the WCG, members and ministers have taken matters into their own hands, deciding that “We will lead this thing ourselves” and “No man is going to deceive me again.”

Instead of Laodicean *Church*, simply think of Laodicean *called out ones*.

Question 2: Did not Mr. Armstrong teach that a corporation is not the Church?

Many who now *reject* what Mr. Armstrong taught about Christ’s Church and Body found a way to assert that they actually *agree* with his teaching. Here is how they did this.

It is well known that Mr. Armstrong taught that God’s Church, which is a *spiritual entity*, was not synonymous with the *corporation* known as the Worldwide Church of God, Inc. Of course, this is absolutely true. (Looking back, we might say it was more true than we could have believed.)

If perhaps up to 70 to 80 percent (the fairly evident number) of those who attended the WCG were never converted—*never* had God’s Holy Spirit—they obviously were *not* part of Christ’s spiritual Body. But they *were* affiliated with the Church corporation, and were *thought* to be members of the Body of Christ. In other words, anyone (and there were apparently about 120,000 like this) could be in the WCG *corporation*, but not be part of *God’s Church*. This much should be clear—and generally *was* clear in the minds of most converted people (except for the huge unanticipated percentages) who heard Mr. Armstrong say it more than once. Perhaps others never thought it through.

Here is how Mr. Armstrong’s teaching, consistent with the Bible, was changed into license to now attend any group of one’s choosing while considering oneself part of the “one true Church”—and part of the “Body of Christ.” Thousands today believe *circumstances require* that Christ must work in many organizations—wherever people are led by God’s Spirit!—since the spiritual Body of Christ was never a corporation!

How convenient!

Do you see the problem? Do you see where—how—such people have blurred the truth of what God’s people all once understood? Mr. Armstrong never said you could be *outside* the Worldwide Church of God, where Christ was working and leading, and still be part of the true Church and Body of Christ. You saw his words many times. He understood that one *could* become converted outside that Body, because he *always* knew that some “few names” in Sardis had God’s Spirit—“had

not defiled their garments” (Rev. 3:4). However, he knew these would eventually have to be led to Christ’s Body. You will see this even more plainly a little later.

While no corporation/organization can claim to be synonymous with all who have the Holy Spirit *at any given moment*, this is not at all inconsistent with the understanding that Christ only leads one organization and that those in His Body are part of THAT ORGANIZATION!

Let no deceiver, driven by personal agenda, tell you otherwise!

Question 3: If this is the Laodicean age, are not Philadelphians just mixed among Laodiceans?

First, this entire book speaks to this question. But a couple more points are helpful.

Think of Mr. Armstrong—because it becomes a pattern for all today. It is well-known that he (slowly) *ceased contact* with the Sardis organizations that he originally fellowshiped with during and after the time he began to learn the truth. Armed with the facts necessary to make a correct decision, he made a conscious choice to *separate* from them in order to not compromise proven truth.

Let’s ask: What if Mr. Armstrong decided that Philadelphians just remained within Sardis? The Work of God would never have been carried out in the 20th century as it was!—and you would never have been called!

Given the same choice in the 1930s (and assuming you *could have known then* that Mr. Armstrong was leaving to establish what would become the Philadelphian era), would you have remained in any of the large *Sardis* groups of the *fifth* era? Would you have ignored the opportunity to join the tiny organization led by Mr. Armstrong? Would you have believed that you could either be or become Philadelphian while staying in Sardis?

Of course not! Why? Because the whole Church once understood that only those who *left*—who removed themselves from fellowship with—the fifth era and actually *joined* with those of the sixth era could be considered part of it—or could even retain God’s Spirit! Why then are so many unwilling to leave a splinter group (whose *seventh* era thinking is so prevalent)? Why have they forgotten that they still—today!—must actively join—must do the Work with—must fellowship with brethren of the sixth era?—and God’s one Church?

Though Laodiceans *are* Christ’s people, in a weak and deplorable condition, He cannot possibly be leading them or their organizations. Again I ask, why? Start again with *Laodicea* means “the *people* rule, judge and decide.” Think. It was CHRIST who gave this final era its

name! Surely *HE* knows He is not ruling a people to whom He assigned THIS NAME!

(An example of people ruling the splinters becomes further proof they constitute the Laodicean era. The name chosen for COGwa—Church of God, a Worldwide Association—was a product of feedback that its leaders invited from the thousands who were joining. There were 411 names submitted!)

Let's be plain. One is Laodicean until he *leaves* Laodicea, *all* excuses notwithstanding—whether laymember, deacon, elder, pastor or evangelist. Many may have the best of intentions, but will never leave the comfort and familiarity they enjoy, deciding instead to just consider themselves “Philadelphians” where they are.

Mr. Armstrong's unwillingness to compromise the truth drove his decision to end association with Sardis in order to fellowship with an initial group of just 19 people (six of whom were his own family) in October 1933.

Question 4: Are not some Laodicean groups better than others?

Yes. It depends on how much truth the group has.

Christ tells Laodicea He would rather it was cold or hot than lukewarm. *Cold*, *hot* and *lukewarm* are not precise, single degrees of temperature. Each reflects a temperature *range*. For example, *ice cold* is colder than *plain cold* but much warmer than *absolute zero*, the coldest temperature in the universe. *Hot* we might say ranges from about 90 degrees (hot to a human being) all the way to the temperature at the center of the sun (27,000,000 degrees Fahrenheit). Yet, astronomers say that the sun is a “cold star.” So even this level of heat is relative.

Here is the point. The brethren of the lukewarm era reflect a *range* of temperatures. Depending on the group, one could be a *little hotter* or a *little colder*. Have you recognized this? This is what leads many to think they are better—“Philadelphian.” Having a *little more* truth does not make one Philadelphian. Being a *little warmer* than others does not make one HOT! However, those who are warmer are more likely to remain faithful through martyrdom in the Tribulation. Consider! *Mr. Armstrong taught hundreds of doctrines—not dozens, as some think!* Some groups are about half correct. Others believe two-thirds truth. One or two might have more, but I have never seen one. All *claim* to be 100 percent faithful—but none are close!

Be careful you are not unconsciously settling for merely being with-*in the higher end of lukewarm*. Only *one* Church has all the truth *and* is practicing real brotherly love (the meaning of Philadelphia), including

to the other groups. Even this very book is a loving attempt to wake you up. I do not receive a bonus for writing it, or a bigger house, car, office or promotion. You might ask why no one else is helping you with such matters—why no one else will put in the long hours of “labor of love” to write just even *one* such book.

Question 5: Was the scattering of God’s people prophesied to happen? And does this mean it is God’s will?

Incredibly, some believe the prophesied Daniel 12:7 “scattering” is God’s will—and that He actually no longer *desires* His people to be unified. Of course, this is ridiculous. God foretells many terrible things will happen in the end time—false prophets and false christs will arise, so will the final Beast and False Prophet, “Gog and Magog” will attack the saints at the end of the Millennium, the “last days” would bring perilous times, Satan would deceive the whole world, great armies will fight Christ at His Return, the last days would reflect Noah’s time, as well as Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel will go into captivity, among others. Also, God prophesies that adultery, lying, stealing, covetousness, and many other kinds of *sins* will grow worse at the end.

Certainly, none would suggest *these* things are GOD’S WILL simply because He *foretold* them!

God knew the scattering would occur because He understood the conditions that would prevail in the wake of the apostasy, prior to Christ’s Return. This certainly does not mean that He *wants* His Church scattered. This would be *contrary* to all the verses that we have reviewed. (Could any think that He actually *wanted* Christ rejected as Head of the Church?—and engineered it?) Yet some now use this reasoning as an excuse to reject God’s government, His true Church and Work—and then, of course, any *other* doctrines they wish to discard.

Question 6: Why do not the various “Churches of God” merge into one large organization?

The book has largely answered this, but consider further: On the surface, the various splinters only *appear* to be teaching the same doctrines—when there are *big* differences. The problem is best defined in the following way: While most leaving the WCG agreed that they disagreed with Mr. Armstrong on various doctrines, they could not agree on *where* they disagreed. As a result, thousands found themselves no longer able to “walk together” (Amos 3:3) in the unity the Church once enjoyed. Thus, they scattered into many places—where they could meet with others of relatively similar belief. Today’s chaos is the natural result.

If God's people agreed with Mr. Armstrong and the Bible, they would all be together, just as when Mr. Armstrong was alive. The prophesied falling away (II Thes. 2:3) occurred, and almost all "survivors" (not those of The Restored Church of God) have rejected a number of beliefs. They forgot Christ's admonition in Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: *hold that fast which you have*, that no man take your crown." Most have not done this. It certainly will be wonderful for all of God's people to finally be in one organization, but the sixth era has given way to the seventh, one Christ calls "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). I repeat, the only cure Christ offers is for *individuals* to anoint their eyes (vs. 18). This will bring them back to God's Church—which they must do to keep God's Spirit.

Question 7: How can one have God's Spirit, but still be outside His true Church? (This is the first of four related questions and answers, each of which builds on the others.)

The answer to this has already been covered via many of Mr. Armstrong's quotes, so only a little more need be said. There are branches—individual Christians—that are cut off from Christ's Church. From that point, His Spirit is dwindling in them, not being replenished. But these "branches" can still be grafted back into the Vine (explained throughout). The flow of God's Spirit can begin again, and this is directly connected to anointing their eyes.

Basic fact. All of God's people, and certainly the ministry, understood in the past that any particular member could be disfellowshipped from the Church and then brought back into it. We all knew that one can be out of the Body of Christ, but return to it. No mystery here. Members can be *in* the Church (in Christ's Body), leave or be put *out* of the Church—from membership—then come back *into* the Church, having never lost God's Spirit. Of course, many never return and obviously God's Spirit does slowly leave them. This process depended on how much of the Holy Spirit they had, and how much time passed while they were cut off, among other things. Are you willing to wait and take the risk?

Question 8: If only one organization forms the Church and Body of Christ, what about *baptisms* taking place in the splinters? Are there instances where these are valid—where there is a genuine conversion occurring?

The answer comes in a quote from Mr. Armstrong:

“Can one who does not know of the true organized Body doing God’s Work and therefore is outside of it, be a member of the true Church which Christ built? The answer is yes—for it is possible for one to have truly repented, believed, and received God’s Spirit—and be following that Spirit as far as he sees and understands—who does not know of the organized Work Christ is using today. But surely God’s Spirit in him would lead one, in due time, into his part in the organized Body the living Christ is directing. **[Reread this sentence until it cannot be forgotten.]**

“Is it possible that one who has joined a sect, church, or denomination NOT doing God’s Work, might be truly converted, and led by God’s Spirit in him?”

“The answer is YES—I have known of a few. But in every case, either they came INTO the organized spiritual organism Christ is using in the real Work of God—or, when their eyes were opened to further light and truth, they rejected it and LOST the Spirit of God. And this was amply demonstrated by the fruits.” **[Now reread this.]**

“Jesus said that His sheep do hear and RECOGNIZE His voice and His truth, and that they will *follow Him!*”

“Just What Is the Church?”, Article, 1970

The last paragraph carries powerful meaning for you. It hearkens back to Chapter Nine. Reread John 10:1-12.

Consider Mr. Armstrong’s own baptism: Seeking someone to perform his baptism, he found a Baptist minister who would do it according to God’s Word. He stressed that he did NOT want to be baptized into that man’s church, denomination or religion—in his case the Baptists. Instead, he asked that he be “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3). In the spring of 1927 he was baptized. No one questions these facts. Mr. Armstrong continued following the truth. Not only did it become clear that he was in the Body of Christ (in Sardis), in his case that Body later grew around him outside Sardis.

The new convert’s spiritual continuance hinges on finding and entering the only organization that Christ leads. How obvious.

Many have come with The Restored Church of God having been baptized in a splinter. Because of fruit shown, *rebaptisms* have been rare. But Christ *did* lead them to where He is working. No one knows how many others have resisted this move.

Question 9: What about those who die in the splinters—who did *not* return to God’s Church, Work, Government and full Truth—

meaning they also never re-entered the Body of Christ? Since they are branches cut off from Christ at the time of death, do they make it into God's kingdom? What is the status in God's sight of those who died in this condition?

First realize that this question comes with two possible timeframes for application: A person dies in this condition either *before* the Tribulation—or dies *in* the Tribulation. In either case, the *assumption* is that the person had not yet lost all of God's Spirit, but was still outside Christ's Church and Body. The assumption is false. The wise virgins who go into the Tribulation will die there, but will do so as members of Christ's Body, having first returned to His Church. Matthew 25 makes clear that the foolish virgins lost God's Spirit before the Tribulation began.

Some basic understanding of those in the Laodicean condition is necessary before a relatively simple answer to these questions becomes easily visible.

All 10 of the virgins of Matthew 25—five “foolish” and five “wise”—had problems with their “oil” supply—the Holy Spirit. Half had dwindled so far in their supply that they had passed the point of spiritual recovery. They had *completely* lost God's Spirit. (They took “no oil” in their lamps. The Greek means “none, not, no, never.” The phrase in verse 8 translated “gone out” means what it says. The Greek means “extinguished, gone out.”) This is why the foolish virgins in the parable were instructed to “go...buy” oil (the Holy Spirit) from “them that sell” (the Father and Christ). While they attempted to do this, the point of the parable is that they had slept for too long—let too much time pass and let God's Spirit pass out of them (I Thes. 5:19).

The good news of the parable is that five virgins did recover—they were “wise” enough to solve the problem, in effect, at what is seen to be the very last minute—meaning in the Tribulation. The bad news is that the five “foolish virgins” could *not* recover to save their eternal lives. They were shut out of physical protection and the kingdom of God (the Wedding Supper) as a result. For the foolish virgins, the process of losing God's Spirit is complete *before* the Tribulation. And these are unable to resist taking the Mark of the Beast.

Recognize that the section of Revelation describing the Laodicean era omits any statement that Christ will “come” to it. This is because it will not yield a single survivor still alive at His Return. Half of the “virgins” die in the Great Tribulation by beheading (Rev. 12:17; 20:4), the result of *Satan's* wrath on physical and spiritual Israel—and the other half sell out beforehand and obviously accept the Mark of the

Beast, dying in the Day of the Lord, the time of *God's* final wrath on all nations before Christ's Return.

Now comes the simple answer. If one dies *with God's Spirit*—either before the Tribulation or as a martyr in it for not taking the Mark—the person died still begotten of God's Spirit! (The Holy Spirit in them will permit them to be changed at the First Resurrection.) The more time that passes before the Tribulation arrives will mean that both situations will apply to potentially large numbers of people.

I Corinthians 3:12-15 holds the key to their salvation, showing that the fire of the Tribulation may “burn” up the part of the person's character that had been allowed to remain “wood, hay and stubble.” All such people are seen to suffer “loss” of “reward”—“but he himself shall be saved; but so as by fire.” These people ultimately *did* participate in God's all-important Work at the end of the age. And they did come under His government. Further, they had initially accepted and practiced false teachings, but repented of them as they returned to God's Church. But they did not fully prepare themselves—become “ready” (Matt. 24:44; 25:10; Luke 12:40)—once they were back in the true Church. These points describe why God will not protect them in the Place of Safety. In the end, Laodiceans have a 50 percent chance of scraping into God's kingdom.

Why would anyone risk so much loss? Yet thousands are—and will.

The bigger picture of what is happening in Matthew 25 to God's people at the end of the age is covered in much greater detail in my book “*Anoint Your Eyes*” – *Christ's Warning to His People*. I have here presented only the briefest thumbnail of exactly what got so many into trouble today.

Question 10: Do splinter leaders have the authority to change the style of government over the Church?

By now the answer to this question should be obvious.

Mr. Armstrong *plainly* taught that true doctrine could only enter the Church through apostles. Rejecting the truth of this understanding is its own false doctrine. Think! People must reject *this* doctrine to be in a position to reject *any other* doctrines. Of course, this book has addressed another great example of where this has occurred—where Mr. Armstrong's teaching about what is the Church has been thrown out.

The next statements come from the period when Mr. Armstrong was putting the Church back on track—after liberals had watered down many doctrines! The truth was under assault, and Mr. Armstrong's instructions show exactly *how* the Church is brought *back* to unity. The first quote returns from earlier:

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

“The New Testament Church of God received all its teachings, practices, customs, FROM THE APOSTLES, with Peter chief over all the others.

“Yet the apostles were the teachers, who instilled in the Church the BELIEFS, TEACHINGS, PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS of the Church. And all members of the Church were required by God to BELIEVE and SPEAK THE SAME THING!

“THERE WAS NO DOCTRINAL BOARD! The teachings of the Church did not come from a COUNCIL of ministers and/or lay members, who voted on what to believe. [**Remember this for the next question.**]

“Right here, MARK WELL THIS POINT: GOD PUT HIS TRUTH INTO HIS CHURCH THROUGH CHRIST AND THROUGH THE APOSTLES!”

“*How Christ Gives the Church its Beliefs,*” GN, November 20, 1978

“God says we in His Church must all believe and speak the SAME THING—we must be AGREED on what is truth and right and good as opposed to what is evil and sin.”

“But *HOW?* How does Jesus Christ put HIS doctrines into His Church? How did He in A.D. 31? How in A.D. 1933?”

“Only by His chosen apostles.

“Our teaching and doctrines must come from God! Through Christ! And through His apostle!

“God has always, in dealing with humans, worked through ONE MAN at a time—one who believed God! Some in ancient Israel challenged this one-man leadership. Some, likewise, have challenged it today!

“First, Moses’ own brother and sister challenged his one-man leadership... ‘And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against them’ [Num. 12:9].

“Yet, though our members and ministers all know this, some are NOT AFRAID to speak contemptuously, in hostility, or defamingly against Christ’s apostle today! They need not fear *ME!* For I will not turn on them or strike them.

“WHY, then, do they not fear GOD? It must be one of two things. Either they do not really comprehend this teaching...or they do not believe that God has chosen me as His apostle and human leader today.

“The CHURCH is *GOD’S* Church. The HEAD of the Church, under GOD, is Jesus Christ. Under Christ, on the human level, is His chosen apostle, through whom He has *raised up* and *built* this SPIRITUAL *TEMPLE* to which the reigning Christ shall soon come in glory (Eph. 2:20-21).

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

“*And Now Christ Sets Church Back on Track Doctrinally!*”,
Worldwide News, February 19, 1979

“Church teachings were being changed. The most resultful booklet of all, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, was attacked...the same with a number of other basic and important booklets written by Christ’s apostle.

“How does God’s Church receive its doctrines, beliefs and teachings? Direct from God, through the channels of Jesus Christ as HEAD of the Church, and from Him through *the apostles!* NEVER by any others! NEVER by a group of ministers appointing themselves as a Doctrinal Committee! So it was in the first century.

“How did the Worldwide Church of God receive its doctrines, beliefs and teachings? EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH CHRIST’S APOSTLE!

“BUT EVERY DOCTRINE, BELIEF AND TEACHING IN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD HAS COME FROM CHRIST *THROUGH* HIS CHOSEN APOSTLE!”

“*What Is a Liberal?*”, Worldwide News, February 19, 1979

After examining what Mr. Armstrong said, we must ask where he got the idea that only he, as Christ’s apostle, could be used to bring doctrine to the Church. Let’s briefly examine what the Bible reveals.

First, notice again what Paul recorded: “Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the *foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:19-20).

In conjunction with Christ’s leadership of the Church, apostles and prophets play a special role. Since apostles outrank prophets, their role exceeds prophets. Yet, since prophets recorded much of the Bible, and because the Bible was complete by Mr. Armstrong’s time, it required an apostle to properly *explain* the true doctrines of God. This was never thought to be difficult to understand. What got lost in the thinking of so many?

Now recall that Acts 2 described how the early New Testament Church “continued steadfastly in *the apostles’* doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (vs. 42). No wonder verses 44 and 46 went on to state that the brethren “were *together*” and “with *one accord*” in the temple. When people hold to the apostles’ doctrine, their

fellowship is UNIFIED! Mr. Armstrong understood this. He did not teach it to elevate himself, but rather because he understood the all-important principle of *how* unity is maintained in God’s Church. When the apostates finished with the Church, they had even convinced (primarily at an unconscious level) most of the 25 or so percent who “survived” and fled the WCG into a splinter that it was “open season” on any doctrine that ministers or brethren might wish to target.

Consider all that you have read so far. No splinter leader possesses the authority to even *alter*—much less throw out altogether!—the truth about the Church, government structure, the Work or any other doctrine that Jesus Christ put into His Church through the 20th-century apostle whom He “sent.” The splinter leaders are *unauthorized* to change doctrines, never mind the entire structure of government. Doing this leaves them guilty of outright rebellion *against* the government of God. Next ask if a doctrine as far-reaching in implication as *what is the Church* would somehow be an exception to the method Christ gives truth to His Church—that such teaching could enter the Church through any *other* office than that of apostle!

I ask again, could the WOLVES who replaced Mr. Armstrong somehow better understand what is the Church than did a faithful apostle? If Christ guided these men, on what basis would He expect His sheep to *know that He did?*—and that they should instead listen to WOLVES on something so big?

Question 11: Is voting by a church board or council permissible in God’s Church?

Many in the splinters have become confused about whether voting to decide matters is appropriate in God’s Church. Let’s examine what Mr. Armstrong taught. We will see that he was clear on this subject after God had revealed to him the Bible structure of government. God’s Word nowhere validates a “bottom-up” governmental approach:

“The REAL ISSUE is whether the COMMISSION the living Christ has been carrying out through me and HIS CHURCH, of which HE is the living Head, should be carried on—or whether it should be abandoned, and your local churches become autonomous—self-governed by the local ministers, independent of any Headquarters where GOD’S WORK is directed and carried on. This means the local churches would be precisely like the Baptist churches in organizational structure and government. That concept is TOTALLY UNSCRIPTURAL. God’s Church is now established GOD’S WAY—the BIBLE WAY, under the

biblical pattern, which Jesus Christ the living Head, under God the Father, and next under Christ those on earth He Himself has called and chosen, and through whom He has raised up this Church, and USED IT TO CARRY ON HIS WORK FOR THIS END-TIME as covered in the prophecy for OUR TIME in Matthew 24:14. GOD'S Church is organized the BIBLE WAY as directed in the Bible—through those HE has chosen and set in the various offices to get HIS WORK done.”

“Those now advocating this Scriptural HERESY want to abolish all authority which Christ as our Head SET in His Church. Their contentions would lead to VOTING—the ‘democratic way’—the very OPPOSITE of God’s Way. They want to be ‘LIBERAL,’ and soon this liberality would lead into general and widespread SIN. They would become just a few more churches OF THIS WORLD—Satan’s world. **[How many in UCG and COGwa will heed the warning in just this paragraph?]**

“Yes, SATAN is the real author of this rebellion against God’s WORK.”

“Some ministers [are] getting confused between this world’s politics in the American ‘democratic’ system, and THE WAYS OF GOD...”

“These dissenting ministers want to desert God’s authority and ASSUME IT THEMSELVES. In other words they want ‘DEMOCRACY,’ VOTING which is TOTALLY un-scriptural. They want to be part of THIS world—Satan’s world. They want to be autonomous in government—INDEPENDENT of God’s HEADQUARTERS.

“This would DESTROY THE GREAT WORK OF GOD! This would put an END to the GREAT COMMISSION for our time—PREACH THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS, as we are now doing.”

“SURELY, dear Brethren, God’s dear sheep are not stupid enough to be ‘taken in’ by disloyal, greedy, SELF-serving, rebellious local ministers who are rebelling against GOD...” **[Did you get this? Be sure!]**

“Brethren, I ask you to FOLLOW THE LORD JESUS CHRIST—follow HIS CHURCH, not some split-off by rebellious, bitter, greedy MEN!”

Brethren Letter, February 25, 1974

Mr. Armstrong refers to democratic voting as “TOTALLY un-scriptural.” The most plain proof that voting should not be used in God’s Church is short and simple—and easy to understand. Study the Bible

from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single instance where balloting *of any kind* was ever used to select a leader. Nowhere in the Bible can you find people *electing* New Testament ministers or Old Testament priests. God’s Word neither authorizes nor reflects *any* pattern of voting to achieve any supposed “godly consensus.”

Also consider this. Voting *always* brings division and discord into the Church! This is the opposite of God’s desire for there to be continuing unity among His people (recall all the verses). Violating God’s structure of government through voting invariably leads to arguing, strife and fighting. This is *why* the churches of this world and the splinters are so many—so divided—and *why* they *compete* with one another for members. People must AGREE or there will be division in *every* endeavor in life. If voting is practiced by, or introduced into, the Church, it will divide the members in one or more ways!

Question 12: To which organization should one pay God’s tithes?

Confusion now abounds about what God expects His people to do with their tithes. Should one save them until they find the true Church? Should people give them to the “best option” they see at any given time? Does God allow His people to temporarily stop paying tithes if they are confused about where to send them? All of these are legitimate questions, and I have known many sincere people who have struggled with what to do.

The first three statements that follow make clear that *God’s* tithes (remember, tithes and offerings *belong to God*, not the one paying them) must be sent to the Church doing the Work and preaching the full TRUTH—the only organization Christ would be leading. They show the *grave responsibility* that *individual brethren* have to put God’s tithes *only* where He is working, where His government is present—where Christ is Head:

“The true Church of God is founded on the Apostles *and the Prophets*...(Eph. 2:20).”

“Listen to [Malachi’s] NEW TESTAMENT teaching! He quotes God, who is speaking to us *today*:

“I will come near to you in judgment...Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them...YE ARE CURSED WITH A CURSE: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation’ (Mal. 3:5-9).”

“‘But ye say,’ continues the Eternal’s Message to us, ‘Wherein have we robbed thee?’ And God replies, ‘IN TITHES and OFFERINGS!’”

“Tithing is God’s *law*—His system for financing His great Work today; it’s commanded, *now!*”

“Some large corporations...send around representatives, *collectors*, to collect for them what you owe the company.”

“Of course you are expected to be sure the collector is the company’s approved representative—not a thieving impostor *pretending* to be the company collector. And you should be equally sure you are paying your tithe to a called and TRUE minister of Jesus Christ.”

Ending Your Financial Worries

“Some ministers are called of God, used of God—many are not.

“The tithe is HOLY. It is THE LORD’S—for HIS WORK. It should be placed where He IS WORKING...Ask God for WISDOM!”

*“Are You Being Tested on this Point?”,
Good News, February 1939*

Mr. Armstrong understood that even Sardis did a small, though terribly divided, “work.” He wrote this after leaving Sardis, revealing that people must “come out” of unproductive “split up and divided” organizations of men:

“We ought to be ASHAMED of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very FEW with the message, with almost no real conversions! All this, while leaders desiring power to RULE send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince tithe-payers that ‘the work is progressing.’ What a mockery! What a tragedy! What a pity!

“We praise God that many of the more spiritual HAVE COME OUT!”

“Did Christ Reorganize the Church?”, GN, February 1939

The following two statements summarize these points by clearly stating that God’s *organized* true Church loyally stands *together* and finishes His Work. Those who do not could lose salvation. They will not get what they sought for *themselves* because they fell into *getting* and stopped trying to *give* God’s precious truth to *others*!:

“What is the PURPOSE of the Church—its divine Commission? To proclaim this Gospel as a witness to the world. In other words, *to carry on* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus, in person, started.

“After His resurrection, He gave His disciples this commission: ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15).”

“Just What Is the Church?”, Article, 1970

“God has specially called and chosen *you!* And WHY? To stand loyally behind Christ’s apostle and HELP in whatever way He opens to you in spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God! Yes, you were specially called for a JOB to do! Not JUST to ‘get saved’—to receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

“Jesus pictured Himself (Luke 19) as a man going to God’s throne in heaven to be crowned and officially given God’s Kingdom. He gave each of 10 servants...a pound each. This represented giving each one at conversion one unit of the HOLY SPIRIT.

“On His return...He called each to accounting. One had increased the one unit of God’s Holy Spirit, in standing solidly back of God’s apostle in proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and helping, praying fervently and remaining loyal—in Bible study, increasing his own spiritual knowledge, 10 times what he started out with.

“...one had not grown in grace and in Christ’s knowledge nor had he contributed to GOD’S WORK by tithes, fervent praying or loyalty. HE HAD THE ONE UNIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ORIGINALLY GIVEN AS GOD’S GIFT TAKEN AWAY. HE DID NOT *GET* HIS SALVATION OR ETERNAL LIFE.”

*“Now Christ Moves Swiftly to Make Church Ready,”
Good News, June-July 1979*

My books to the splinters make plain that Mr. Armstrong placed *uncompromised doctrinal truth* as the only proper STARTING POINT for those remaining in the Philadelphian condition!—or for being in the true Church for that matter.

This must be clearly *established* and *proven* to the tithepayer before sending God’s tithes to an organization! Yet so few give thought anymore to the fact that tithes belong to God—meaning to where *He is working!*

Finally, Mr. Armstrong wrote the following in a quote cited previously. It answers in a single statement all pertinent questions about how to identify where God’s tithes should go:

“In an effort to mislead and draw away God’s people *and tithes*, the misleading idea is now being circulated that this MAN (not Church) also preaches the Gospel. So, why not *divide your tithe, sending half to the man and half to God’s* CHURCH—or else send it alternately to each.”

“1) The tithe is GOD’S tithe, *not yours*, and is to be sent to GOD’S CHURCH, where Christ, alive and well, is actively working, directing and blessing.

“2) God has only ONE Church, and that Church has a few hundred local congregations worldwide, all a PART—and an integral *working*

part—of the ONE spiritual organism, the Worldwide Church of God... Jesus Christ does not HEAD, guide and work in any competing man *or* church. Christ IS NOT DIVIDED! Christ's Body is led on earth, UNDER HIM, by His chosen apostle whom HE appointed and used in BUILDING His Church in our time. God's TRUE Church is performing the FUNCTION of the Church—carrying Christ's Gospel message to *all the world*.

“3) The *man* who wants half of God's tithe *does not speak the same thing*.”

“No, brethren, he does NOT preach the same Gospel. He was attempting to water down God's true doctrines and oppose its doctrines and its apostle and to become the *self*-appointed head of God's Church.

“That's why he was DISFELLOWSHIPED from God's Church. He WAS NOT speaking the same thing. GOD'S CHURCH cannot speak with an UNCERTAIN SOUND!

“4) This man is NOT a Church of God. A man can incorporate himself, under man's law, using the NAME of a Church—and he came *as close* to the name ‘Worldwide Church of God’ as possible, TO DECEIVE and mislead brethren into thinking he is THE SAME CHURCH. Any ‘Tom,’ ‘Dick’ or ‘Harry’ can incorporate himself, with the signatures of a couple other men as ‘directors’ in the name of a church. BUT THAT DOES NOT make him a church!”

“...stating clearly which is GOD'S Church. It is:

“1) Where God's TRUTH is. Not with one disfellowshipped for trying to water down that TRUTH.

“2) Where God's true Work is going out to the WHOLE WORLD.

“3) Where Christ's chosen apostle is.

“God's tithe is to be PAID to GOD'S Church, where CHRIST is working. Jesus Christ does not work in two ‘churches,’ one competing against and trying to draw members from the other. Christ is NOT DIVIDED!

“God does not have two churches—only the ONE Church that Jesus Christ founded in A.D. 31...”

*“Christ Is the Living Head of Only One Church—Not Two,”
Good News, December 18, 1978*

Question 13: Where has Christ's Body been since Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986?

This is a natural—and important—question. Almost everyone who knows that Christ leads one unified organization has been confused regarding the exact whereabouts of Christ's Body since Mr. Armstrong's death. Many thought it continued under the false prophet (now add false apostle) in Oklahoma who was fired (by God) in December 1989 for

“arising, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after himself” (Acts 20:30). His understanding of prophecy has been tragically warped *from the beginning*, never mind that he takes many titles that belong solely to God. Christ’s Body certainly did not go to that obvious counterfeit.

First, recognize that *prior to* the end of 1992, the Worldwide Church of God was still the (by then much weakened) true Church and still the (weakened) Body of Christ. The *God Is...* booklet changed EVERYTHING! In it, the apostate leaders (in the fall of 1992) introduced an entirely different god, and thus *disfellowshipped* the true God from that organization. The WCG at this point could not any longer have been the Body of the *true* Jesus Christ. A *different* Jesus was now being worshipped, the one that is part of the pagan trinity. The WCG fell into rank idolatry, thus *disqualifying* it as *anything* of God.

Since the Church had already been moving directly toward mainstream Christianity, any who wanted to stay in the Church of God and Body of Christ were now *forced* to leave the corporation—“The Worldwide Church of God, Inc.” As had happened many times in history, a reconstitution of Christ’s Body was underway. Recall Mr. Armstrong’s description from the Easter booklet, quoted earlier, of such a necessary flight to reorganize.

So where was the Body of Christ *after* 1992? The answer is found in 1933. First, understand that when Mr. Armstrong left Sardis, the Body of Christ was where *he was*, but also included others. Although this was originally a small number, it grew larger around him as God called more people into the truth. At the time, no one could have believed Christ’s Body was that tiny group, separating to follow the truth.

Forward to late 1992. The pattern of history—recent and distant—is our guide. The Body of Christ was *within* the group that formed *at that time*—the Global Church of God (GCG). For some years, the Body of Christ was within *this* organization. But this later changed. It slowly became evident that the leader of GCG, including most around him, had rejected many truths that Mr. Armstrong taught (including that of the one true Church). In November 1998, the majority went off into further error following this man to start the Living Church of God. (Still mired in confusion, LCG claims they are the *best* “true church”—who would say different of themselves?—and the remnant of Philadelphia. Their teachings and fruits demonstrate this to be impossible.)

After the split in Global, the Body of Christ was within the small remaining group of something over 1,100 people. Paralleling Mr. Armstrong’s final departure from Sardis, only about 150 brethren separated with me from Global on May 3, 1999 because they would not compromise. (My two-volume Biography tells the whole story in great detail.

Many have found it fascinating.) Christ has kept His promise that His Church could not be destroyed. It continues today in power, reaching every corner of the world with the gospel and the rest of God's truth, and also feeding the flock of God.

Question 14: Did the apostles Peter and Paul run separate operations—separate true churches—in the first century?

Some have fallen into the thinking Paul worked independently of Peter—confused about God's hierarchical principle of government. Touched on earlier in this book, Mr. Armstrong answers more thoroughly here:

“In founding God's Church, Jesus worked primarily through one man, Peter, even though He originally chose His 12 disciples. Few have ever noticed how Peter was the real leader. Jesus had told His disciples to go NOT to the gentiles, but to the ‘lost sheep of the House of Israel.’ The ‘House of Israel’ *never* refers to the Jews—always to the kingdom that became known as ‘the lost ten tribes.’ They were in Western Europe and Britain when Jesus gave this instruction.

“Undoubtedly it was *after* Peter and the original apostles had left the Middle East and traveled to Britain that we read only of Paul and those under him.

“Notice now PETER's preeminence. Few have ever put all these scriptures together as I shall now do. This shows PETER was leader.

“‘And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called PETER, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea...And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matthew 4:18-19). This is the first mention of calling His disciples. It is significant that PETER is named first.

“Matthew 10:2: ‘Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called PETER. Notice PETER is called ‘*the first.*’

“Matthew 16:16-19: ‘...Simon PETER answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee [PETER], That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...And I will give unto thee [PETER] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou [PETER] shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou [PETER] shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’

“In Matthew 18 Jesus appears to be speaking to the 12 as a group, and in verse 18 the binding and loosing is again mentioned. The binding

and loosing was given to APOSTLES, but PETER was [the] unquestioned leader of the original 12 apostles.

“John 21:15-17: The commission, ‘Feed My sheep’ is three times given to PETER.

“Acts 2:14: On the Day of Pentecost, it was PETER who gave the first sermon, converting some 3,000. Verse 38, PETER gives the instruction for baptism.”

“The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) showed that PETER was predominant over even Paul, although Paul was the ONE MAN God worked through *primarily* in the ministry to gentiles.”

“Now in closing, back to the theme of this article. God COMMANDS that we all SPEAK THE SAME THING! It must be that thing which the mind of Christ speaks—and He speaks only as the Father commanded (John 12:49).”

“*And Now Christ Sets Church Back On Track Doctrinally!*”,
Worldwide News, February 19, 1979

The scriptures Mr. Armstrong cites are *conclusive*. Paul, who came much later, and into an already well-established and organized Church, was clearly *under* Peter—the chief apostle. Peter and Paul were used to reach *two different peoples*—Jews and Gentiles. This organizational structure was necessary due to the uniqueness of the first century.

Question 15: Who are the “other sheep...not of this fold” mentioned in John 10:16?

Some read John 10:16 and think that it could be referring to God having other organizations as part of His true Church. This is not what it says. Here is what Jesus said: “And *other sheep* I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (Realize the New Testament Church—with *its* sheep—did not even yet exist.)

First, “*this* fold” refers to the Jews who were living in Judea at that time. Jesus, being of the tribe of Judah, brought the gospel message, from the Father, to His own people first. They rejected both the Messenger and the Message. Notice the “parable of the ten pounds”: “But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Even more stark is Matthew 27:25 where the Jews said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”

Now, who *are* the “other sheep...not of this fold”? Throughout the Bible, God refers to the people of Israel as His sheep. There is certainly

no indication that this is referring to the Gentiles, future splinters or any other organizations. Those “other sheep” are the *other tribes* of Israel. In Matthew 10:6 we find Christ’s instruction to His disciples, “But go rather to the *lost SHEEP of the house of Israel.*” The Jews made the same reference in John 7:35, using different words: “...will He go unto the *dispersed* among the Gentiles?”

Recall that Israel was one united nation until the reign of King Rehoboam. Under Jeroboam, ten tribes separated from Rehoboam to form a new nation called Israel. The remaining tribes with Rehoboam formed a nation that was known as the kingdom of Judah. Of course, the twelve tribes have not been united since.

John 10:16 reveals a happy, glorious conclusion. Jesus said, “Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” Ezekiel 37:21-28 describes an inspiring (and detailed) prophecy of the final reunion of all the tribes of Israel, with David as their resurrected King under the Master Shepherd, Jesus Christ, ruling with the rest of the saints.

John 10:16 in no way states that Christ has disconnected organizations and groups—“other sheep”—that are part of His New Testament Body somewhere else. Let no one convince you it does.

But this age has produced its own list of objections...

OBJECTIONS

I have tried throughout the book to refute the many objections that have arisen surrounding what is the true Church. In 2000, I made a list that included 50 separate reasons—excuses!—people use to no longer pursue the location of the true Church at all costs, or to believe what the Church once taught. I have probably not heard them all, but I may have come close.

Some say they “do not want to split up their family”—or “My husband is the head of the home and he must decide where we attend.” Others declare, “I am waiting for a sign from God to leave my group”—“Restored is too small to be God’s Church” (Restored is not small!)—“I can serve more people in my large group”—“All the groups cannot be wrong” (but neither can they all be right)—“People who are rigid about doctrine seem angry, accusative, intolerant and judgmental” (sadly, this has been true in some cases, but certainly not here)—“Staying in a bigger group means I can be part of a bigger Work” (but *we* are clearly the biggest Work)—or the opposite “The Work is over so we can attend *anywhere*”—“I need a live speaker, not a tape” (we have many live speakers)—“We want to meet in a hall, not a house” (we meet in halls wherever there are enough brethren)—“I want to be where there is a bigger fulltime ministry, or more ministers” (we have fulltime ministers the world over, with *many* more every year)—or conversely “All fulltime ministers can no longer be trusted”—“Because the Church is scattered, we all now look to God, and ministers are unnecessary”—“I am lonely, I need a congregation nearby” (we have many congregations, more all the time)—“I will only follow a well-known evangelist”—etc., etc.

Understand: None of these excuses even remotely justifies knowingly remaining outside Christ's Body!

Spiritual Anarchists

Some argue a third position regarding the true Church. They believe that *all* organizations are wrong. These see no room for “men” in any role or function. This view is best thought of as *spiritual anarchy*. Several earlier quotes from Mr. Armstrong describe those “loners” who think they can achieve—get!—salvation on their own, without giving within the Work.

God outlines two ways to deal with people of foolish thinking. In some cases, “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit” (Prov. 26:5)—in others, “Answer *not* a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like unto him” (vs. 4). The latter is primarily the case with those who reject “all organizations.” So this section is brief.

Ironically, these people think they have reached the *pinna*cle of Christianity! They “receive truth straight from God.” They “report to Christ.” They “submit to Jesus only.” While they self-righteously declare, in effect, “It’s just God and me,” such people are not of God *at all!* They often do not pay tithes *anywhere*. No one may *correct* them. They will not practice giving as participants in *God’s Work*. Many reject Mr. Armstrong as even an apostle, never mind the end-time Moses (Mal. 4:4—this subject is covered extensively in my sermon series “First a MOSES, Now ELIJAH—130 Proofs!”). They usually have a series of personal opinions about “where Mr. Armstrong was wrong.” They also generally have their own distorted ideas about prophecy. And they largely ignore the command to “not forsak[e] the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25). In the end, having pastored thousands of people, I have learned that these are invariably *unteachable* and *ungovernable* malcontents, of no use to themselves or others.

Such individuals have often suffered injustice (real or imagined) by ministers, are more rebellious personalities by nature, resent Mr. Armstrong, claim they have “heard terrible things about Mr. Armstrong,” or that they have “sources” confirming what he was “really like.” They use the weaknesses of men (again, real or perceived) to avoid *all* human leaders—“Christ alone is my Mediator!” (This is true, but it is not in any sense in opposition to the true Church teaching.)

One Mediator

A related principle comes to mind. These “independent ‘Christians’”—better described as just *plain arrogant critics*—claim that following a

man means elevating that man to a position of “mediator, between them and God.” This thinking is simply unbiblical. The apostle Paul wrote, “Wherefore He [Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Paul also wrote, “For there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

Obviously, Christians confess their sins to God—not to another human being. Jesus alone takes our prayers before God’s throne, as High Priest, into the “Holy of Holies,” and gives us the authority to pray to the Father directly (Heb. 4:13-14). No *man* can mediate between God and mankind. Christ alone carries this role. But this does not preclude that ministers may sometimes need to tell others that they must repent of unaddressed sins or they *will not be in God’s kingdom!*

Some, chiefly the Catholics, cite John 20:23 as proof that ministers and priests have authority to forgive sins: “Whosoever sins you remit [forgive], they are remitted [forgiven] unto them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained.” This verse does not mean that human beings can forgive sins on God’s behalf. The context of Christ’s words in this verse is merely the authority—to disfellowship dissenters and heretics (and to allow them back into the congregation, after repentance)—that He was giving to His future apostles and ministers (John 20:21; I Cor. 5:2; I Tim. 1:20). Men sometimes must recognize sins that are obviously unrepented of.

Any who claim a man can hold power over a Christian’s salvation is “handling the word of God deceitfully” (II Cor. 4:2). People are free moral agents and they make their own choices within the framework of God’s Church, Government, Work and Truth.

The truth that Christ alone is our Mediator has nothing whatsoever to do with the doctrine of the true Church. Think. One of the purposes of the Church and the ministry is to teach you about, and guide you to, the Mediator, Jesus Christ, along with the knowledge of *how* Christ functions as our High Priest. How would one learn these truths if he were not first taught them by *men*? Read Romans 10:14 in this very regard. Also read the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, focusing on Acts 8:31.

Loners in fact *reject* Christ’s rule over them—the very opposite of what they claim! They ignore verses such as I Thessalonians 5:12-13, quoted by Mr. Armstrong: “We beseech you, brethren, to know them [ministers] which labor among you, and are *over you* in the Lord, and *admonish you*; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” They also invariably pervert, “*Remember* them which have the *rule*

over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God...OBEY them that have the *rule over you*, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...*Salute* all them that have the *rule over you*” (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).

The “loner Christian”—the spiritual ANARCHIST—rejects many *plain doctrines of GOD* en route to his position. Do not fall for the silly arguments that are thrown up against the kinds of verses cited in the last two paragraphs. There are many more.

“He that receives you receives Me...”

As with Mr. Armstrong, some reject me *personally* as the one Christ would choose and send to continue His Church, Truth and Work.

Jesus told His disciples, “He that receives you [God’s representatives] receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me” (Matt. 10:40). Also read John 13:20.

God would not send someone without ensuring we could *know* that he came from God. If God sends a man, He would obviously want it *known*. He would make it PLAIN!

Understand. Someone, somewhere—yes, *someone, somewhere!*—had to be raised up after Mr. Armstrong’s death to continue God’s Work and lead in the regathering of God’s people. God does not speak audibly from the heavens, but rather through His human servants. If you decide God is not using The Restored Church of God and working through its leader, you must go in search of what would be a *clone* of this Church and Work. Be sure to keep in mind all of the established “qualifiers” in your pursuit. If you do this sincerely, whether your journey is short or long, it will bring you full circle!

Think just of this book, and ask: Who else is saying these things?—*any* of them? No one!

Years of Preparation

It is helpful to include some of my background. Prior to being fired from the Global Church of God in the spring of 1999, the fact that God had selected me for a special purpose had not occurred to me, even once. Only at *that time*—a few weeks before God established The Restored Church of God—did I begin to look back at my remarkable training and experience, and conclude that God had been preparing me for a very long time. And this only occurred to me because I could no longer find a senior minister—or even one *trained* minister—who was fully holding to all the truth I treasured.

When I was finally forced to look back at my years of preparation and experience, one of the things I saw was that I had been trained, in part, personally by Mr. Armstrong during the first 15 years of my ministry (after marrying his secretary in 1971). I recognized that I had been *prepared* to be *able* to continue the Work as he had done it. Also, I was familiar with how he thought in a host of ways that would be invaluable to anyone who was thrust into what I had to do. I also remembered he had repeatedly said he would if necessary “walk across the street and start over.”

This meant I had no excuse for not being willing to do the same. While the amount of work necessary to press on was beyond comprehension, my training was in place, and I was only left with whether I would follow through as Mr. Armstrong would.

In addition, God had caused me to travel an extremely difficult course, as He does with all His leading servants, in preparation for the time to gather the remnant of God’s people from among the survivors of the apostasy. I did not appoint myself. No one else came along—and believe me, I searched for someone who was not compromising!

Of course, many will never accept God’s selection. This is true even among those who still feel that God only works through one top leader at a time. If they do not “anoint their eyes” *first*, they will not—actually *cannot*—look with the right criteria in mind.

Consider for a moment the well-known thinking of the twelve-man, elected committee that still leads UCG, which is comprised of a large percentage of the total number who survived the falling away. Their leaders have adopted democratic government (so has the 2011 COGwa group), where the *elected* committee then *votes* on who should be their leader for a set “term of office.” They justify this appalling action—where the tail wags the dog—by stating, “God has not raised up a single man, as with Mr. Armstrong. If He did, we would follow him!”

God *has* selected His leader, but they do not follow. Why?

Blind Leaders

To appreciate their “church view,” take a glance back to the final years that the leaders of UCG remained in the Worldwide Church of God. This includes the period through the spring of 1995 (many ministers who went with *other* groups also left at either the same time or only slightly earlier). These men compromised, appeased, politicked and played along, while at the same time being perfectly willing to sit in the presence of the false, pagan, manmade, trinitarian “god” for 2½ years!

Facts are stubborn things. And the facts of history are that most of these men *accepted* this false god, and only *later* reassessed their position in varying degrees.

Again, having absorbed dozens of false doctrines and ideas to which they had grown accustomed, these ministers left at the last possible moment, when they saw the sheep leaving without them. They saw themselves about to permanently lose their paychecks if they did not immediately *follow* thousands of tithepayers out of the WCG. But, not wanting to appear to be *followers*—and horrified that many who were leaving were either joining or contemplating joining one of the two large, established, more doctrinally conservative splinters of the time—they quickly jumped in front of the departing flock, claiming to be their *leaders*.

However sincere these men may be—then or now—recognize that they have a long history of profound blindness—and weakness! Of course most of them will never follow me as I follow Christ (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Of course they will not recognize where and through whom God is working. Of course they will not give up their power, authority and influence. And of course they spin stories about me, as do many others, to frighten as many brethren as possible into remaining frozen where they sit—because this keeps the tithes rolling in.

Many of these leaders also enjoy a relatively good relationship (behind the scenes) with the leaders of the other organizations, because the beliefs of the big splinters are much more *generally* similar than these leaders are willing to admit. However, because none of them are willing to give up their *individual seats of power*, certain organizations that could otherwise probably be combined remain separate. (Again, I urge the reader to listen to my sermon “The Synagogue of Satan Identified—and Marked!”)

Those Not Prepared

Understand that I am not trying to personally attack these men. What is quietly taking place in the background, if you really knew the facts, is precisely the opposite of this—and *their* attacks on *me* started long before anyone left the WCG. I am relating certain events so you can understand how virtually *all* of the splinter leaders think. They *all* share a deep and complete *blindness* that prohibits their ability to see how much truth they have lost—and where the one organization is that has not compromised *any* of it. They cannot even appreciate the STAGGERING AVALANCHE of fruits we demonstrate that exceed *all of them put together!*

God carefully and thoroughly trains His leading servants over a long period of difficult coursework. *His* choice could never be one of the

“golden boys”—the “beautiful people.” These are the men who generally attained high office through political dexterity and smoothness, and by rarely taking tough stands or making difficult, unpopular decisions—unless it personally advanced them.

I have known many men who are supremely gifted at “walking the halls of power” and only rarely offending any of the many constituents that they felt they must please, if they were to continue moving up. Such “leaders” would *automatically* draw large numbers of followers simply because they are “name brands”—and because they have such smooth, comfortable personalities, and are good at telling people what they *want* to hear instead of what they *need* to. These are many of the *very same men* who were, and still are, able to secure enough votes to be installed into UCG’s and COGwa’s elected leadership teams.

Ask yourself: Why do so many look for one to follow among those who played along and sat silently with little or no resistance *for years* while Mr. Armstrong’s successors slaughtered scores of thousands of people—*your brethren*? Why do so many want to be led—again!—by such weak *non-leaders*? Why would ANYONE want to follow *followers*, let alone a second time—or even a third time, as with COGwa? Yet thousands do.

But again, before God can use the man *He* has chosen, all of the man’s coursework, suffering, training and experience must be in place. Understand the following: Mr. Armstrong could *never* have picked the one God would use as his true successor. If he had, God’s purpose for the apostasy—to *test* which brethren loved His truth—and then which loved all of it—would have been thwarted.

Mr. Armstrong’s Final List

Some have boasted that they were on Mr. Armstrong’s final “short list” to become the succeeding Pastor General upon his death. In fact, Mr. Armstrong *was* considering perhaps four or five men at the time he settled on a successor.

Since a *faithful* man could not possibly be part of God’s thinking for that next stage of His Plan, anyone bragging today that he was one of the “finalists” in late 1985 for the role of Pastor General should feel most *uncomplimented* by the fact that he was even under consideration. After all, he would have been under consideration *by God* (of course, not in Mr. Armstrong’s thinking) for the specially appointed role of throwing out the truth, ending the Work, slaughtering much of the flock, shrinking the corporate church, dispersing the assets and set-

ting in motion the final, great spiritual test for God’s people—the one that most are failing!

Understand. God was leading Mr. Armstrong’s mind directly *away* from anyone who might be even a little bit faithful!

But *eventually* God would have to make *His* choice of leader known for those waiting to take the second step out of the splinters. Self-appointed, compromised, cowardly leaders—blind to the age, lacking proper training for the job, and seeing God’s choice as a rival—would *have to* denigrate this man. Their blindness, and the general nature of how they conducted their ministry for decades, prohibits them from understanding my leadership. After all, they have proven they never understood *Mr. Armstrong’s* leadership!

Comprehend this!

A Matter of Rebellion

Look for a moment at Samuel and Saul. There is an obvious parallel here. *God* had picked Samuel as judge over Israel. The *people* of ancient Israel wanted someone more attractive—more acceptable to the world’s standards of a leader’s profile (in Israel’s case, a king). *God* told Samuel that the people had not rejected *him*—they had rejected *God’s* rule over them, as Israel’s true King.

This is what is at stake today. But, as with ancient Israel, most will never see what they are doing *in this light*.

This matter does not come down to a personal choice or some kind of “spiritual” *popularity contest*. You must locate the Church of God and do this by examining what is taught and the Work being done.

The litmus test of who the human leader of God’s Church would be could never be defined by how many self-appointed rivals “speak well of him.” As a matter of fact, with both Church history and Scripture as the standard, receiving very much of such praise can actually become a kind of *disqualifier*, revealing the man to have been a pleaser, compromiser, appeaser-type of personality. Christ said to “beware” of these (Luke 6:26).

Before taking their own “stand” in UCG, most of these ministers, including some of the other splinter leaders, attacked me from their WCG pulpits when I was fired in early 1993. (Actually, after they had privately expressed to me concerns similar to mine, years before they were willing to leave the WCG, some of the very men who *turned me in* to Pasadena went on to be senior *leaders* among the splinters.) I was willing to stand *alone* at that time as a field pastor, even largely unsupported by GCG’s—now LCG’s—leader, when they were not yet even willing to stand *with*

a group—so they could continue to enjoy safety in large numbers in the apostate WCG—for over two more years!

And how many Sardis ministers spoke well of Mr. Armstrong after he left their fellowship and was forced to indict their doctrinal understanding and fruits?

Waiting for a Different Leader?

Do you think there is time for another man, and this is if he started *now*, to start the task of reassembly and to finish the Work—when he would have not so much as a single booklet in place to begin? I ask those who believe the “another man will come later” illusion:

Where is that man NOW? Who are even *candidates* to fulfill this responsibility?

How many men do you think there are today—who at this point must still be hanging back in the shadows!—that might suddenly appear and be willing to routinely work 80-hour weeks (as I did for *years*)—and even longer, the later they start—to redeem the lost years?

How much more spiritually weak will God’s people be when someone else *might* be willing to initiate and present them with another organization, over 8,000 pages of books, booklets, articles, magazines—and so much, much more?

Then ask, how is this man occupying himself *today*? After all, at some future point, he would have to explain that many *more* years of his inaction! Never mind explaining why he hung back in the shadows for now so many years after the apostasy.

Enough Time?

Then there is the tougher question of whether there is even remotely *sufficient time* for another organization to form and get established, and this is if it happened NOW, never mind *later*—after more years pass!—leaving even *less time* for the supposed “faithful flock” to be gathered and the true Work of God to be restored, let alone completed.

Think on all of these things. Force!—FORCE!—FORCE!—yourself to address them!

Do not kid yourself. There are no “mighty men” waiting in the wings. No “evangelist” is coming to gather the “faithful” sheep and finish the Work. (Only a few from Mr. Armstrong’s time remain *active* in the splinters—who have not sold out and laid down in retirement—and these four are now elderly or *very* elderly.) Remember, such a restart

would include the gigantic task of rewriting the full truth this man has not yet (many years after the apostasy) even been willing to *start* to produce.

Jesus Christ is not divided. God has *already* raised up the *only leader* willing to stand up and take on such tasks!

All the matters discussed in the previous chapters bring to bear more than meets the eye...

IMPLICATIONS

There are *implications* to all that you have read. Grasping it at the academic level is the *first* step. But you *must* go further. This knowledge involves action! It involves *obedience* to TRUTH.

We learned Mr. Armstrong taught that the government of God was re-established in the Philadelphian era, which walked *together* because it agreed with God, Christ and His apostle. *That* was—and still is—the only place people are *actively* holding fast. And *that* was—and still is—the only place Christ could be working. You must go to one Church.

There are no other possibilities!

Be honest with all that you have seen. God cannot work in the government of more than *one* organization, through more than *one* chosen leader—or Christ IS divided. This is the lesson that must be *driven home* in your thinking!

Any organization that does not believe in only one true Church could not possibly *be* that Church! The logic is easy.

Picture This!

Think just a little. Imagine Christ declaring the following to one of the splinters: “I know you don’t believe there is one Church—and therefore that you could be it—but I am superimposing on you that you *are* that Church. This is even though you are ignorant of My decision, have rejected what My apostle taught you and what My Word so plainly states

about the unity of My Church—and though you bought into the false doctrine originating from traditional Christianity. I also set aside that you have rejected many other of My truths, as well as My form of government, and thus Me as your church’s Head. Yes, I put all that aside and *force* you to be the true Church—and I only work through you.”

No one takes the time to see their newly accepted belief in this light. How many if they did would not be more than a little embarrassed at what their actions are *really* saying?

My book on the government of God presents a description without names of how each of the large- and medium-sized splinters have altered the pattern of God’s government within their organizations. The silhouette of each organization is easy to recognize. In the next several pages, however, the groups are necessarily *named*.

It has come time for additional critical thinking. Fight the urge to allow your mind to be clouded with bias when your organization is described. Look for and examine all assumptions in your thinking. Only the briefest descriptions are offered or each of the next subheads would need to be an entire chapter.

The United Church of God

Consider UCG’s plight after its split: About 175 ministers and local elders (the number keeps growing), and thousands of brethren (this number also keeps growing), suddenly left, throwing the entire organization into disorder—and in every regard. UCG began with about 20,000 in attendance, but had decreased to a reported approximately 15,000 at the time of the split. It has now lost well over half of its fulltime field pastors, including almost all of the most “senior” ones.

How long does one remain in such a tragically broken, declining organization waiting for fruits of growth to appear when they were never there in the first 15 years while its members and ministers were together?

Of course, any such discussion would assume that the United Church of God would address the literally scores of *other* false doctrines (involving *other* vital truths lost) that it teaches beyond those of wrong government and the Protestant idea about what is the true Church. How likely do you think it is that UCG will undertake a serious discussion of even one false teaching?

The facts are that its leadership has now managed to eliminate—by termination or resignation—the *ever-so-slightly* more conservative ministers who were holding it back.

The painful reality is that the United Church of God has basically positioned itself to return to the world even faster than before, as if that were possible. I have heard top ministers in UCG openly state in my presence that they believe the great majority of what Mr. Armstrong taught is Protestant doctrine. Some have put the figure at 85 percent. Such stunning spiritual blindness!

This blindness is not seen anywhere more than in the routinely disgraceful conduct associated with UCG's "college," Ambassador Bible Center. The ungodly pranks, world-mirroring dress, outrageous YouTube videos, appalling disrespect toward authority and other exactly-like-the-world behavior of this institution almost become this church's single greatest testimony that the Jesus Christ of the Bible *never* led this organization, and that "another Jesus" and "another spirit" began influencing its leaders long ago.

How telling it is that more thousands by far left the WCG to join the United Church of God than did those who entered all the rest of the splinters and slivers combined! Staying too long in Worldwide took a terrible toll on these thousands who seemed not to know any toll was even exacted upon them.

Much like the Philadelphia Church of God, except for having chosen a different path to the same end, the United Church of God may already be passing beyond even the edge of any form of true Christianity. Realize again that many organizations in the world—and we have long known this—keep the Sabbath, keep the Holy Days, tithe, understand the truth about hell and that human beings have no immortal soul, and have bits and pieces of truth about prophecy, etc. The entire WCG recognized none of this ever meant that God's Spirit was present even a little bit in these groups of varying sizes and knowledge. But the true God is merciful with His people. And we can also hope He will be more merciful with UCG's leaders, past and present, than they have been with His flock.

Church of God, a Worldwide Association

Now think of COGwa. This organization *may* be a little better off (doctrinally) and a whole lot worse off (in all other ways) than UCG. For a long time, it could not even decide on much more than an *interim* governing structure. Its founders took a long time designating a leader of the corporation of any strength or authority—never mind did it have for a long time many of the *other* things needed just to function at a minimal level.

COGwa for a long time had no headquarters! Worse, starting with no literature—none whatsoever (and still almost none)—they still are at

best *many* months from *any* kind of “work”—and *years* from any *growth* beyond whoever continues to hemorrhage to them from UCG. (Who else would go?) Already discussed, how could anyone possibly believe that there is sufficient time left in the age to build from scratch all that needs to be developed to reach great numbers across the world in a major work? (The only bright spot on COGwa’s dark horizon is that a few more ministers and brethren continue to join it from UCG. Obviously, this will be the only source of “growth” for this organization for a very long time.)

Similar to the question regarding UCG, an even greater one arises with COGwa: *How long* does one remain there *waiting* for leaders to produce ANY fruit—never mind *significant* fruit? Another question towers above the last one: Why would COGwa’s leaders suddenly produce fruit quickly—or *anything* quickly!—when they happily sat for over 15 years wasting time in an organization (UCG) that *never grew* (and was in fact continually declining)—that had virtually NO FRUITS!—and when many of them were UCG’s top leaders through those years?

Another question regarding UCG repeats itself with COGwa: Will this organization address the literally scores of *other* false doctrines that its leaders taught and supported beyond those of wrong government and the Protestant idea about what is the true Church?

Surely even Pollyanna would find the situation hopeless. Are you willing to “roll the dice” with your eternal life?

Church of God, an International Community

Before there was COGwa, there was the “*original* COGwa”—the Church of God, an International Community (COGaic), led by David Hulme. The leading ministers of COGwa, including UCG’s *second* and *fourth* presidents, were not the first to be fired by its elected governing committee after which they took their ball and went home.

In March 1998, having been removed as UCG’s first president after almost three years in office, David Hulme left UCG and took some 1,500 to 2,000 people with him. Incredibly, this organization has accomplished almost *nothing* in the intervening years—except to decline in attendance. Largely (and strangely) publicly silent as an organization, and from the beginning shot full of numerous false doctrines far beyond acquiescing to the Protestant definition of the Church, they have barely done *any* “work.” (Offering a few articles, COGaic has not prepared even one booklet in all these years.)

The organization’s long-standing emphasis (from the outset) on reaching “a higher level of people than Mr. Armstrong sought to reach,”

essentially because reaching the “weak of the world” carried no appeal to its “intellectual” leader, has basically ensured that this group would never grow even in the human sense.

The Living Church of God

Next is LCG. This organization has barely grown since its inception in late 1998, but really since 1995 when it was known as the Global Church of God. LCG lies internally divided and in confusion, with many willing to speak privately of their disagreement with a host of things—but without acting on them.

Almost all of its senior ministers, and any number of its pastors, have either died, several tragically or violently (I often think of the many ministerial widows there whom I know)—or left the organization because they came to realize its leader is as Mr. Armstrong so consistently described him. LCG is also shot full of false doctrine—in fact, barely less than UCG and COGwa—and *far beyond* the problem with the name of their church or their false gospel.

The biggest difference is that UCG and COGwa are more honest in acknowledging doctrines they have changed than has been Roderick Meredith. His pattern has long been to make chasmic changes, but then declare them to be what Mr. Armstrong believed privately or “stated in conferences in the 1950s.” (Supposing the latter is true—most times it is *not!*—Mr. Armstrong’s understanding so obviously *grew* from those early years.) It has been this continual deceit about the past that has caused large numbers in LCG to smugly believe they are the “true faithful,” with all others mere pretenders.

We must repeat yet again the same question: Will the Living Church of God address the long list of *other* false doctrines that its leader teaches (and its ministry supports) beyond those of wrong government (LCG’s government is false in various ways explained in my book about government) and the acceptance of the Protestant/Methodist view of what is the true Church? History demonstrates that this will not happen and, in fact, the *spirit* leading this organization (but also the others described here) makes this not even possible. There is no record in New Testament history that the majority of God’s people ever *collectively* voluntarily exited long-standing apostasy. (Our website lists *many* errors of LCG, including how their gospel is false in three distinct ways, bringing its own very real and *evident* curse on this organization. Read Galatians 1:6-9.)

LCG also began a college in 2006, called Living University. The *spirit* leading this university becomes more evident when one considers

that it pursued accreditation from worldly “professional academics,” just as did the apostates when they went to the world to learn “acceptable” doctrine. In an astonishing move, the Living Church of God has now authorized certain of its faculty to study theology in worldly universities. One man even received a Masters degree in theological studies from Liberty University (Jerry Falwell’s Baptist institution) in 2011.

This pursuit is exactly what the apostate leaders did from the beginning of their work. Of course, they went on to completely destroy the Worldwide Church of God! Living Church of God members: Your headquarters is telling you what will happen in time—no matter what they say about why they are “different.”

Mr. Armstrong absolutely condemned the idea of accreditation—and explicitly forbade it—because he knew where it would lead. The pursuit of a worldly seal of approval regarding its “university” offers insight into *why* many of LCG’s doctrines came straight from popular Christianity. Make yourself see the connection.

The Philadelphia Church of God

And PCG. Worse than any of the other groups—if this is possible. Most know that God could not possibly be working with the top leadership of this organization, which began in late 1989. PCG’s leader takes over a dozen different titles and offices that apply solely to either the Father or Jesus Christ (he takes above 30 titles total, with more all the time). This is outright blasphemy and idolatry of the highest order. No matter PCG’s claims about being the true Church, this alone disqualifies them. Its leader is worse than a false prophet, and even worse than a false apostle. By taking just a *single* title of Christ, never mind having taken *at least* a dozen divine titles overall, such a leader has made himself a *false christ*, and in the fullest sense! When presented with the facts, no serious person would believe such a man has *anything whatsoever* to do with the true God!

The Philadelphia Church of God publicly described itself in December 2010 as having grown from “4,000 to 5,500 from 1995 to 2010.” While this would be 100 more people per year—a *very* paltry number—the picture is actually *much* worse. PCG has in fact been *declining* in attendance for years, having reached a peak closer to 7,000 in feast attendance a few years ago before falling halfway back toward 4,000. It is more accurate to say PCG has been *dropping* by an average of about 200 people per year for several years.

Some organizations just find giving too much information unhelpful.

Summary

A conclusive statement about *all* of the bigger organizations (but about virtually all of the smaller groups as well) is necessary: Any number of local elders and deacons have come with us from the organizations just listed (newness makes COGwa an exception). Several pages could be added here just describing the appalling reports they bring about conditions they left behind. These center around an absence of many crucial policies established under Mr. Armstrong, as well as the general lack of instruction to the ministry and their members on a host of basic principles that apply to so many aspects of true Christianity also taught by Mr. Armstrong.

The *GOVERNMENT OF GOD* book is an addendum to the last several sections. This is because it reveals in detail exactly how all of these same organizations have moved far away from God's form of government as taught by Mr. Armstrong, while at the same time deceitfully claiming they have not.

The reader is left to do his own homework on all these matters—to bring his own *critical thinking* regarding what he sees around him.

What If...?

The United Church of God, the Living Church of God, the Philadelphia Church of God and the Church of God, an International Community have had a combined income during their years of existence of something under \$900 million!!! (Including even just a few of the bigger slivers would take this number to one billion dollars or over.) You do not need to believe me because most of this is a matter of public record.

Where did so much money go?

Think what the devil did by getting God's people and leaders to scatter into many different organizations. Recognize that the Worldwide Church of God took in \$199.5 million in its very biggest year, 1990—considerably more than *any year* when Mr. Armstrong was alive, including his latter years. What if *one billion dollars* had come through ONE organization—ONE unified Church led by Christ? Imagine the size and impact of such a mighty Work. So tragically, this vast and *ever-growing* sum of money has been diffused, misappropriated—squandered!—largely as the result of a SINGLE FALSE DOCTRINE! (Of course, others related to it played a part.)

This could only take place because tens of thousands of brethren (and misled co-workers and donors joining them) were willing *for*

many years to support what was happening. Tithes belong to God. This means severe judgment—being called to account—awaits those who have been responsible.

But those who refuse to continue participation can be forgiven!

The Past Is Prologue

When thinking of the future path of UCG, COGwa, LCG and PCG remember, “The past is prologue.” (But this is also true of every other group that left the WCG, which are equally stagnant and doctrinally unsound.) A repeated warning comes from George Santayana: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Albert Einstein said this: “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.”

There is *cause* and *effect* in virtually all aspects of life, and this book has at least touched on this great principle. With all the *bad effects* plaguing the “Church of God” world, why does no one ask the *cause*? Why does no one ask: Do we have the RIGHT CHURCH? Could it be that we are not in the *correct* Church—the TRUE Church?

Jesus taught, “You shall *know them* by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16), and shortly followed this with, “Wherefore by their fruits you shall *know them*” (vs. 20). The fruits of what is labeled “Christianity” in the splinters are deplorable. These organizations are wrought with ever-worsening division, confusion and disagreement—and widespread and worsening doctrinal compromise—truly the blind following the blind. On the basis of *fruits alone*, all should leave these organizations! Yet, the majority will not!

In fact, many of them will oppose this book—this will almost certainly be true of every leader. Some will go further and vehemently attack it. Truth, when it disagrees with what has come to be accepted and cherished, is invariably relegated to cult status.

Knowledge Brings Responsibility

Knowledge is of no purpose unless used. This book is no exception. You have been shown much truth in the most extensive, and certainly the most thorough, book you will ever read on the true Church.

The prophet Hosea summarized Israel’s problem in the Old Testament, and at the same time the WCG splinters of the modern age. This includes so many of God’s people. Let’s read it, followed by other vitally important scriptures: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:

because you have *rejected* knowledge, I will also *reject* you, that you shall be no priest to Me [remember Revelation 5:10, and also the “royal priesthood”—I Peter 2:9—of God’s Temple]: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children” (4:6).

What you have learned from Mr. Armstrong and God’s Word through this book is NOT new to most—but it is extraordinary knowledge, almost *completely forgotten!* With this knowledge comes not only the need to *remember* central elements of Church teaching, but also responsibility, or rejection by you begets rejection by God.

Consider what you now know: God’s Church is not divided; there is only ONE Church of God; and *this* is the organization bearing God’s authority and doing His Work. You no longer *lack knowledge*, but are left with whether you will accept that knowledge. Jesus said, “For unto whomsoever much is *given*, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

With knowledge comes responsibility. Choices must be made.

Your Responsibility

The burden of proof that we are the only true Church and sole Body of Christ rests with neither The Restored Church of God nor me. It is not our responsibility to prove to you God’s government is here—or that the only Work He directs is here. This is *your* responsibility! God commands His people, “Work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12).

Consider. Restored teaches the full truth as we all once believed it. It is doing the same powerful Work as the Church once did it—all under the government of God as the Church once understood and practiced it. The facts, evidence and proof necessary to know these things are abundantly clear, and demonstrate that these statements are true. Our beliefs, traditions, practices and commission are identical to what Mr. Armstrong taught and did—and what the Bible teaches—and you can prove it. (To see the incredible growth that has been occurring here, read my Open Letter posted in January 2013 “The Restored Church of God: Much Fruit—Proof God Leads *This* Church!” The splinter book *The Work of God – Its Final Chapter!* will explain a Work being done that simply boggles the mind.)

The burden of *disproof* also rests with *you*. It is up to *you* to decide whether Mr. Armstrong was wrong about the doctrines he taught. *You* must decide if he was incorrect in teaching the government of God was restored to the Philadelphian era, which understood God was only actively leading, and working through, *one* organization at any time—the Worldwide Church of God, when Mr. Armstrong was alive.

We know and have *proven* who we are. We know what we believe and who taught it (II Tim. 3:14). We hold no illusions about the Work still before us. If you are unsure of these things, *you* must resolve what is unclear in your mind. *You* must be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19)—and return to all that you once believed and practiced!

Understand. (1) If there *is* one true Church, you had better find it. (2) This organization would be the only place Christ governs. (3) It would also be the only place doing His Work and (4) the only place the *full truth* is being taught. (5) It would also necessarily be the only place to which God’s people should be paying tithes. If one is not paying tithes to *this Church*, he is giving them to someone who does not represent God—and is thus *stealing* them from God. (Recall Mr. Armstrong’s reference to “thieving impostor.”)

You must process through the alternatives—what you might see as the “candidates” to be God’s Church—and correctly discern the *true* Church from all impostors. Remember, Satan counterfeits *everything* of God. Determine to be without excuse in identifying God’s Church, Truth, Work and Government.

Here is a problem at work within you. Why would anyone who *sees* himself as having *already* stood up for the truth feel a need to go searching for the supposed “one true Church”? This is the greatest impediment to most people having the willingness to apply Christ’s command to “anoint your eyes.” You *must* be willing to *examine* what you have unconsciously absorbed, and *how* you justify your position. No one can do this for you.

Human nature does not want Christ telling it what to do. People do not want God *ruling* them. They *do* want salvation, but with no strings attached.

Do not be confused where *Christ* is not confused. He is not *forcing* His leadership on an era that has rejected it! God works in one organization. People who doctrinally disagree, and whose organizations do the same, will continue splitting and scattering throughout the last days. Think UCG split—but also of so many others. God can only work where the people and the leader follow His “whole truth and nothing but the truth”—only in those who *permit* Him to lead.

Tendency to Procrastinate

It has been said, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Solomon recorded an insight into why well-intentioned people often do not follow through on their plans: “He that observes the wind shall not sow; and he that regards the clouds shall not reap” (Ecc. 11:4).

This verse discusses a spiritual principle through use of a physical analogy. A translation almost never worth quoting, the *Living Bible* best captures the meaning: “If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.”

Do not tell yourself that you do not *yet* need to make a decision—that you need not *yet* leave your splinter—that you need not *yet* re-enter the Body of Christ—that you need not *yet* come under God’s government. *No* decision IS a decision to do *nothing*. Mr. Armstrong often cited Psalm 111:10, warning that understanding would be *taken away*, if one did not act on what had been shown.

Woe unto all those brethren who will not *act* on warnings—where no agenda is present! The unbiased reader will see no agenda here.

Most will be unwilling to leave the condition in the splinters. Some of these may even have sincerely *intended* to take action, but here is what will happen to them: They will procrastinate. Precious time will pass. Emotions will diminish. Urgency to act will wane. Memory of principles learned here will fade. Sadly, and this is hard to imagine, some may even decide, perhaps unconsciously, that merely reading and agreeing with this book, or parts of it, was spiritually sufficient to recover from blindness. Their blindness will remain. But God’s Spirit will not!

Time is not on your side, because there is not much left in this age, and because blindness only grows *worse* as time passes. To delay very long could be fatal.

But suppose you decide to leave your organization. Expect to be suddenly surrounded and barraged by sincere people telling you why you are making a terrible mistake! This *will* happen. Get ready for it! However, just as quickly, if you successfully resist their arguments, expect most of these same people—that you thought loved you—to just as suddenly attack and belittle you the moment you leave their presence!

Face the Facts!

What has been covered in this book is not everything that could be said. However, there is more than enough here to be able to “approve things that are excellent” (Phil. 1:10), and to reject what is so obviously wrong—IF you are absolutely sincere in your determination to see again what so many can no longer see.

A towering question arises for final re-examination: Where are all the Laodiceans? Christ’s answer is that they are all those converted minds still primarily outside His one zealous, uncompromising, unified true Church. If this is false, three things must ALL be true:

(1) Mr. Armstrong was terribly mistaken on an array of *big* doctrines, now *correctly* taught in the splinters. What is the Church—how is it governed—who brings truth—the role of an apostle—and so much more.

(2) All the *passages* seeming to show that Christ leads only one unified Church and Body have to mean something completely *different* from the obvious, and were/are better understood by the apostate wolves and the Protestants than Christ’s apostle.

(3) Christ misled His Church—or allowed it to be misled—in numerous absolutely *crucial* areas of understanding and doctrine *for over half a century* (Heb. 6:18).

If you do *not* believe these three premises, you *must* leave your present organization and come to the only place with *all* the earmarks of God’s Church (and of Philadelphia)!

As God states in Isaiah, “Let us reason together” (1:18). If Herbert Armstrong did not know how Christ governs His Church, did not even know what *is* the Church and how Christ gives truth to it (never mind his other supposed errors), he could *not* have been God’s servant! If you think this way, be honest and admit that Mr. Armstrong was a fraud, and that you later learned the *truth* from *false* leaders in the WCG. Now think. You have not thrown out the many *other* doctrines that Mr. Armstrong taught. Think of the Sabbath, the Holy Days, God’s Law, tithing, knowledge of prophecy, unclean meats, etc. You are tacitly saying he was a true servant of God. Does God teach the truth through a mix of true and false leaders? If so, how would He expect us to know this was His method?

Your leaders are too weak to *honestly* admit, “We have collectively *rejected* what Herbert W. Armstrong taught us, and we hope you are *too stupid* to notice—or that nobody will expose us [as this book does]. We’re counting on brethren to be *unwitting* and *gullible*—and that nobody will present them with the facts (history, Scripture, statements from Mr. Armstrong) because *we dare not admit* that Herbert Armstrong taught the opposite of what we do.” Will you trust such men with your crown (Rev. 3:11)?

Think about what it would mean if our decades-long understanding of all the verses in this book, reflected by what Mr. Armstrong taught over and over, were *all wrong*. If this were true, the net result would be that the Church of God was in near darkness, on absolutely *central* points, throughout Mr. Armstrong’s ministry—and only NOW has come into the light of much fuller and greater understanding. This would mean that the division, disagreement, competition, hostility and confusion—and terrible fruits!—now reigning between and within the

splinters is a better and more *spiritually advanced state* than before the apostasy—when fruits were in abundance.

Go to your minister. Ask: “Why have you rejected what Mr. Armstrong taught?” If he exclaims, “No, we haven’t rejected Mr. Armstrong’s teachings!” you just learned a lot about him.

“Enemies”—“Against Christ and God’s Church”

This is the final time you will hear from Mr. Armstrong. Note well his words. The publication date—1954!—shows how long ago these points were believed by Mr. Armstrong and understood in the WCG. Time has not changed their application. Notice how the word “enemy” and the term “serving the devil” come into use:

“That ONE BODY of Christ, carrying on HIS WORK, must function as a UNIT. It must work in harmony and unity, with teamwork, for God is not the author of confusion. There must be no pulling off in different directions by different men *in* that one Body. There must be no competition or division. And anyone who knowingly promotes, or encourages anyone in promoting, such disharmony, competition, and division, becomes the enemy of God, and is serving the devil and not God! [**Here is this warning again.**]

“In order that this ONENESS—this UNITY of purpose and action—this HARMONY and co-operative teamwork, be maintained and preserved in GOD’S WORK, God has ordained GOVERNMENT IN HIS CHURCH. And He has empowered His Church with DIVINE AUTHORITY.

“That government in God’s Church is government from God, thru Christ, thru apostles, thru evangelists, thru pastors, thru other elders, *in that order!*”

“Either the Church of God with headquarters in Pasadena is the ONE AND ONLY true Body of Christ, thru whom Christ carries on HIS WORK, or else it is deceived, or it is a fraud. There is no other possibility. YOU MUST FACE IT, and DECIDE WHICH ALTERNATIVE IS TRUE. If it is the Body thru whom Christ works in carrying on HIS WORK to the world for this time, then it is THE ONLY BODY that is being used of Christ. *Christ is not divided!*” [**Note how Mr. Armstrong defines Christ not being divided.**]

“This is the time when the ‘Philadelphia’ era of God’s Church has been reached. Somewhere in the world today is this true CHURCH OF GOD, fitting the description of the ‘church in Philadelphia’ of Rev. 3.”

“There is no example in the Bible where God carried on HIS WORK under the New Covenant by any single individual OUTSIDE OF, *independen-*

dent of, HIS ORGANIZED CHURCH AND HIS ORDER OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CHURCH. Anyone outside of God’s Church is AGAINST God’s Church!

“Jesus said: ‘He that is not with me is *against me*; and he that gathereth not with me *scattereth abroad!*’”

“*Must God’s Ministers Be Ordained by the Hand of Man?*”,

Good News, May, 1954

No true Christian doubts that the *apostates* have been “against God and His Church,” “serving the devil”—and, in effect, the worst enemies of Christ and His flock, now for over 25 years (and maybe for all time). But the splinter leaders have supplanted the apostates. These *newer* enemies—yes, Mr. Armstrong has, in effect, called the splinter and sliver leaders *God’s enemies*—are more dangerous than most will believe. Over time, much of the gap between them and the apostates disappeared. When truly understood, by *every* standard, they are *more dangerous* to God’s people today than anyone else. Here is why. The WCG false leaders faded and passed into history. The deception, compromise and rebellion of the splinter leaders is the clear and *present* danger!

God backs up this statement. Paul wrote of the “last days” when “evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:1, 13). Evil, seduction and deceit were not foretold to grow worse until the mid-1990s—and then get better.

I do not sit in judgment of who is evil and who is not. That is not the purpose of the book. My job is to help you, not attack your leaders’ hearts. But understand. Jesus Christ calls the splinter leaders enemies. Mr. Armstrong merely confirmed this, and explained what Christ meant.

I confirm Mr. Armstrong!

Do you find yourself thinking Mr. Armstrong overstated this for effect? If so, why does Jesus’ own statement at the end of Mr. Armstrong’s quote above not apply? Surely no one with God’s Spirit believes *Jesus* overstated the facts. Surely *Jesus* knew who is *with* Him and who is *against* Him—who is *gathering* His sheep and who is *scattering* them—and how to explain the difference so we can know.

“Against Me” means AGAINST GOD! It means that leaders who are pulling away from where Christ’s government resides *are* GOD’S ENEMIES. An enemy is an enemy, and it would mean that such men ARE serving the devil, not God.

Now we understand more clearly *why* God’s people have been scattered (Dan. 12:7). Christ’s enemies are scattering His flock. (Recall Question 6 in Chapter Nine.) How are they doing this? By undermining, attacking and trying to *destroy* His government—and to tell people they can attend any

number of organizations and still be in the “true church.” Thousands are following these men, and therefore *assisting* them. What does this make such people?—or you? You cannot follow Christ through *His* servants (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1)—*and* follow one of His enemies!

Choose. But remember God tells you, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft” (I Sam. 15:23).

(To learn more about *why* the splinters have fallen into such error, again, I urge you to listen to my sermon “The ‘Synagogue of Satan’ Identified—*and Marked!*”)

First Decide—Then Choose!

You must decide whom you believe—Mr. Armstrong, backed by the Bible, or the Protestants, apostates and splinter leaders. Much is at stake. If there *is* one true Church—only one organization—you must find it. And that place, and that place alone, is where you will find God’s *government*—that place, and it alone, is where you will find God’s *Work*—that place, and it alone, is where you pay God’s *tithes*—that place, and it alone, is where you will find God’s *truth, ministry, literature, college* and *everything* that is of God—that place, and it alone, will evidence the *fruit* that Christ is leading it.

Now this truly sobering thought. *No one* can much longer reject the doctrine of one true Church. Soon *everyone* on Earth will either bow to God’s one Church or to the great European universal counterfeit.

A forced choice lies just over the horizon!

God required Israel to make a decision with knowledge He had given them. Before Moses died, and before giving the reins of leadership to Joshua, he spoke this to all Israel on God’s behalf: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: that you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey *His voice...*” (Deut. 30:19-20).

A generation later, before Joshua died, he spoke these words to all Israel, assembled before him: “Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in *truth*: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve you the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: *but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*” (Josh. 24:14-15).

Elijah presented a stark choice to Israel, shortly before putting to death in the people’s presence the 450 prophets of Baal: “Elijah came unto all the

people, and said, How long halt you between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people *answered him not a word*” (1 Kgs. 18:21). The question applies: Will you “answer God”?

In the New Testament, Jesus declared, “No servant can serve *two masters*: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (Luke 16:13).

The decision facing you is the same one that ancient Israel (the Old Testament type of the New Testament Church) faced over and over, and that many thousands before you have faced since Christ built His *New Testament Church*.

God tells you He does not accept indecision—that you cannot serve two masters—that you cannot halt between two opinions. God does not permit you to “answer Him not a word.” To make *no choice* is to make the **WRONG CHOICE!**

In the book of Acts, Luke describes Paul’s reference to the “unknown god” on Mars’ Hill: “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (17:30). Ignorance is the state of being without knowledge. Once knowledge is given, ignorance is no longer an excuse.

Make It Personal

I repeat, I have pastored many thousands in my ministry. Most of these professed to love God’s principles, doctrines and Law—as long as tough choices were not *personally* applicable to them. This is one of the greatest lessons I learned working with every conceivable human personality and human problem.

Most people will not make hard choices. It has been my sad experience that when faced with even the clearest decisions between right and wrong, most lack the *basic strength* to make the “tough call.” This is even more true if it means having to admit they have been wrong. Having grown up in a world filled with compromise, most have no difficulty rationalizing their actions—or inaction.

I cannot make you care about the truth in this book. Most will not. But many will. For those in the middle, rereading the entire last subhead of Chapter One about obeying truth, this time with the book behind you, will increase motivation.

Will you confront what your organization teaches? Or will you put it off for a more convenient time?

Will you bring critical thinking? Have you clarified the goals? Examined assumptions? Evaluated evidence? Assessed conclusions?

The last paragraph is summarized in two questions: Will you consider whether you have been deceived—and for years? Or will you push this thought from your mind, because it is too painful?

Are you able to take a different path from your friends, family members, and the majority of God's people around you? Or do you overvalue familiarity and contentment?

Will you seek God with earnest prayer, study, meditation and fasting, and ask Him to show you where He is working? Or will you carelessly assume that HE is wherever YOU are? Will you follow Christ's Spirit and voice of truth leading you to one place?

The end of the age approaches. The world is in terrible condition. Headlines are bleak. Forecasts are worse. Rouse yourself from sleep. Return to God's Church. Obey this great truth!

Other Splinter Explanation Packet Literature

“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 “prophesy 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!

SHOULD ACCUSERS BE ANSWERED?

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.

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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