

# Church of God, The Eternal

P.O. Box 775  
Eugene, Oregon 97440

## Answers to Accusations in Articles From the *Worldwide News*

September 1979

Greetings Brethren:

The Feast is almost here. Everywhere, excitement and anticipation are mounting. Such joy and purpose have to be living proof of the validity of God's Holy Days. We are so thankful and grateful to God for keeping us true to Him—faithful and obedient to His way of life.

Brethren, pray diligently that Satan and all his demons will be restrained. They know who *you* are! If left unrestrained, they will do their "worst" to impede you, to create chaos and confusion, and to divide and injure. We are helpless of ourselves. But remember, we belong to God. He will fight for us.

The achievement of joy and happiness is a matter of *attitude* and *outlook*. Begin NOW to build the positive, spiritual side, so that you may live it abundantly at the Feast. If we elect to be defensive for the self, we can create problems for ourselves and wrongly influence others. If we will to live the abundant life, nothing can offend us or impair our spiritual success.

Now, brethren, we come to the *Monthly Letter* in which I promised, for the sake of some who do not understand just what is happening in Pasadena, to rebut the lead articles in *The Worldwide News*—dated June 11 and June 25, 1979.

Please be patient, brethren. It is our desire to answer these issues and henceforth, if God so wills, to avoid all such involvements in the future. We desire to orient to things which are far more constructive and helpful.

Therefore, let us be pointed and explicit! What is herein stated may be helpful to many in the future.

Certain people presume to indict by association. Recent publications accuse us of deliberate and overt action calculated to overthrow or destroy the Worldwide Church of

God. The statements and assertions are so bizarre, unreal, and false that were it not for the confusion and doubt generated in the minds of people who have come to us for explanations of such absurdities, we would not even dignify the writings with a response.

Brethren, we do not know who writes the material for these publications, but one of two different situations must apply. First, if the author is *aware* of what is being said, the irrefutable fact is this: He is making statements and hurling accusations fabricated out of whole cloth. And by his comments, it is made obvious that what is important to him is subterfuge and deception—intended to cloud and bewilder the readers. Second, if he is *unaware* of the real facts, he is equally culpable—for, any such author should obtain the facts before writing.

What is happening is a tragedy. The heart-rending and emotional upheavals experienced by many peoples of the world cannot be compared to the bewilderment, confusion, and sorrow generated in the last-day church. People's lives have been shredded and left in a complete shambles. They know they are being lied to, for the most part, at every turn of events. They know they are being exploited, but many are not sure what God expects of them. We hear these comments frequently. But others have elected to bask in the halls of ignorance. "Don't tell me anything—I do not want to know," they say. They are so confused and uncertain that they are not sure whom they can believe anyway.

Yes, Satan has accomplished a master stroke in his effort to confuse. A people who once believed the Truth, had faith, and were certain of their identity have lost everything. The leaders who have gained prominence and acceptance (at least, physical acceptance) are abusing these scattered, confused, and bewildered sheep in atrocious ways. But apparently, the sheep love to have it that way—for they will not assume their spiritual obligation to prove and try all things. Therefore, almost anything can be written and the blinded sheep will read it—accepting everything said without asking whether it is the truth or demanding proof. Entirely too much of that written is categorically wrong and yet is implicitly believed by those who have willingly blinded themselves.

For the sake of those who *do ask for facts* by which to evaluate, this letter must be written. The intent and purpose of this letter is to call to task those who have presumed to write spurious material about us. Their writings are erroneous and *they know it*. Therefore, their intent is not to aid and help bewildered people to arrive at correct answers—but to ensnare them for their own personal advantage.

Although this letter will be pointed and explicit, it is imperative that we maintain a respectful posture. This we have attempted to do at all times, because we do believe and

KNOW that the church out of which all of us have come was—and IS (physically)—the church of the last days. Knowledge of that fact lays a very great burden upon all who were called. They must be cognizant of the fact that God said the church *would apostatize* (2 Thess. 2:1–3). Once the church apostatizes, there is a very serious question as to whether the people who remain in it continue to be the true, spiritual children of God. At what time a member who elects to remain a part of the visible *church* ceases to be a truly converted servant of God, only God would know. But this we can be sure of: There does come a day when they are no longer the genuine people of God. The historical examples of ancient Israel and the first-century Church of God prove, irrefutably, the veracity of that statement. Though the nation of Israel and the people of Judah continued to be a physical people, they were set aside by God—no longer were they His beloved people, over whom He kept a watchful eye and whom He divinely protected. We must understand the difference between the physical and the spiritual. As was the case with ancient Israel and Judah, so it was with the New Testament Church of God established by Christ and carried on by the apostles. That church continued to function as a *visible church out of which the true, spiritual Christians were thrust*. The obvious conclusion is that while the *visible church* continued, the faithful Christians were no longer a part of it—because they refused to become apostate with the church.

### **Making Relevant Spiritual Facts Known Is Biblical**

As a result of bewilderment and confusion which developed during the latter half of the first century, several New Testament Biblical writers were inspired to write of the condition. Among the principles stressed by them is the spiritual necessity to refrain from ridicule, evil malignity, abusive language, contempt, and accusation. Yet, at the same time, it is evident by the life of Jesus Christ and His behavior with respect to the physical church of His day (Acts 7:37–39 and Matt. 23)—as well as by the conduct of the faithful apostles of God—that such respect did not obstruct the necessity of being honest with fact and condition. In other words, relative to spiritual matters, the facts can and should be made known. Unique and sordid problems of individuals have no significant place in the final judgment of an organization or of a responsibility. Each individual must pay his own price for his sins. But, unauthorized doctrinal changes and careless attitudes manifested toward that responsibility do affect all who have played a part in the overall development of that body (organization or church). Each of us must ascertain those facts and make responsible judgments relative to them. This is an absolute spiritual responsibility of everyone called by God.

Though we should respect the offices involved, the facts must be presented and allowed to speak for themselves. After that, each Christian must make a judgment for himself. The day is coming when all the information relative to what has occurred in the church will be made manifest. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Why? Because either a) people have chosen ignorance, on the basis of the assertion they did not know whom or what to believe, or b) they have blindly accepted a church or an individual, believing that those to whom they looked would be held accountable and therefore no accountability would befall them. The most serious responsibility incumbent upon every called child of God is the necessity to *prove the times* in which we live, the conditions transpiring in the physical church, and the action required of each Christian. No lateral shifting of responsibility will be acceptable to God. No departure from that initial, God-given purpose will be tolerated by Him.

*Now* is the time to know—to come to the knowledge of what God was permitting, and to understand the essential nature of the test administered. In the day God begins to make all things known, it will be too late. For, the just shall live by faith—the ability to spiritually prove all things NOW and walk daily by faith, not sight. You must not allow yourself to be destroyed by what is spoken or written. Have faith in God—manifested by continuity in the *way of life to which you were called* and for which you were baptized.

Now to the essential nature of this letter.

In the Worldwide Church of God newspaper, some have presumed to slander us—both by association and by direct accusation. Let me take the time to set the record straight. Remember, I was in Pasadena when much of the turmoil was going on. What I shall give to you *is not rumor*. I shall relate concepts heard directly or seen practiced. The day of revealing will make the facts plain and obvious.

Let the Worldwide Church of God writers, themselves, bear the accountability for the contents of this letter. We do not mind being held accountable for the *true reasons* for which we are no longer a part of the visible body. But are they afraid of those facts?

Let us examine the following points in logical sequence. They will relate the facts.

### **A Servant Called To Establish an End-Time Church**

From the beginning, we have stated emphatically—on tape and in literature and other writings—that logic, common sense, and faith dictate the verity of the above statement.

(*Exception*: We neither accept nor reject the Philadelphia Era concept. Since it involves prophecy, we are not sure anyone yet knows the explanation for the seven churches of Revelation). To deny an end-time Church is to deny every fundamental principle in the Bible. It is tantamount to accusing Jesus Christ and altogether denying Him.

Of necessity, this concept requires the firm, allied belief that the Truth was also given—by revelation. Once divine revelation has been given—and the Bible makes it abundantly clear someone in the last days did receive it—*it cannot be changed or altered*. Truth is Truth. It is eternal and absolute. Therefore it cannot be modified, updated, or changed to make it more acceptable humanly—for whatever the reasons advanced.

Our studies make it unequivocally plain that the Worldwide Church of God was the church of the last days. The doctrine was revealed. To our knowledge, there is no other church which even came close to abiding by the *whole* of God's Word. For, not by bread alone, but by the entirety of God's Word, are we instructed to live.

Let me reemphasize, we KNOW the church was the true Church of God. Which equally reinforces the fact that to be the true church, divinely commissioned by God, required the *original revelation of the Truth*. Therefore, doctrinal changes are unauthorized by God and are an evident manifestation of human disloyalty and unfaithfulness. Other factors are equally obvious, but they will be covered in their appropriate times.

### **The Basis of Our Spiritual Posture—Now—Is Revealed Truth**

We have not denied the commission to God's servant of the last days. On the contrary, we have taught the necessity of holding fast to the *faith once delivered*—the faith which we were taught initially.

In a literal sense we are the only ones who, by belief and action, manifest honor and respect to that called servant of the last days. Anyone who changes doctrinally with him—for the sake of a continued human relationship—denies the call, commission, and work performed.

We practiced the original teaching of Paul and the last-day servant, who said, "Do not follow me if I depart from the truth which God gave." The last-day servant did depart—it is an incontrovertible fact. Is there any argument about that? Coincidentally, the admission is bound up in the recent statement about "setting the church back on track doctrinally." If it had really remained the true, spiritual Body of Christ, why was it off track? Where is the

historical example of *any* church's apostatizing and later returning to the true way of life once delivered? But, some would have us believe this is another event which is unique in the annals of human history—as was the "new dimension of the Work" concept.

By abundant admission—though from oblique excuses, not straightforward and clear—the church had apostatized and become grossly secular and liberal. A "righting of the ship" was now deemed necessary. However, we have not yet seen any kindly apology for dereliction—for the failure to carry out the divinely given responsibility. Having been in Pasadena for a number of months at the time of the initial upheaval and doctrinal changes, I know that information about the doctrinal changes was conveyed to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and that changes of any significant dimension were made with his knowledge. During the initial months of turmoil, on several occasions I was told forcefully by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, "God revealed the Day of Pentecost and the truth of divorce and remarriage to me, and they never will be changed!"

What happened to that revelation? It seems to me that when Truth is revealed, one must surely know it! The apostles seemed to have little difficulty in understanding this when the same liberal forces began to erode the Truth in their day.

Furthermore, the dogmatic statement was made by Mr. Armstrong that if and when these expected changes (regarding Pentecost, divorce and remarriage, tithing, etc.) were made, the church would cease to be the Church of God. Do the fruits borne since 1974 support this statement?

We emphatically believe God chose His servant for the last days! We believe the Truth was taught, initially—it was the faith once delivered.

From the beginning, we have said that when and if the church truly repents and returns to that way of life first given, we will return. At this moment, where is any genuine admission of wrongdoing and dereliction of duty? Where is genuine repentance evidenced, as required in the cases of David and Peter? Thousands of lives, once secure in the knowledge given, have been destroyed! Though there is an individual responsibility, Jesus said anyone causing the destruction of even *one* little sheep has an awesome price to pay.

When there is true and genuine confession of wrong, along with heartfelt repentance and a return to the *whole* of revealed doctrine, we will return. But not until then.

We were terminated from employment, and denied the right to exercise our ministerial responsibilities, for no reason other than the fact we would not change doctrine. All other

reasons advanced are cover-ups, intended to deceive. The recent accusations are absolutely false. Our unwillingness to change doctrinally is the *only* legitimate reason for the dismissal.

### **A Work Given—to a Called Servant**

A work was prophesied for the last days (Matt. 28:19–20). We all were called through the message proclaimed by God's chosen servant.

Not once have we denied that fact! The knowledge of this is precisely the reason for our faithfulness to the message which we heard. No amount of clever argument, on either side of the issue (the belief there was specific revelation of the Truth in the last days, versus the belief faithfulness to man or organization is the principle requirement), can alter the plain statements of Jesus Christ. He said the Body (the Church) would exist until His Second Coming, and the true message (singular—no change involved) would be proclaimed. We heard it! And believed it!

Now we faithfully adhere to it, regardless of what has happened to the majority who once believed the same thing.

But there is a premise of subtlety and hypocrisy being employed—a defective rationale which has enslaved many unsuspecting people. Let us carefully consider.

The membership is asked, with a flourish of pride, to think back upon the past forty to fifty years of "the Work." They are assured that the Work of God for the last days continues on the course it once began. But then, although there is no hint at subsequent transition (a change in the Work, which is not the same as was carried out initially), the people's minds are shifted to the *present* endeavor.

What the people fail to catch, in that quick mental review, is that the work being performed today is not the same work which was accomplished in the initial years and for approximately forty years following.

Since the message sent by God is indigenously related to the physical activity, *any change in the message is also a change in the Work!* The message *changed dramatically* between the years of 1972 and 1975. There was at the time a candid admission, by the leaders of the church, that this was the case—and all knew exactly what was transpiring. The changes of 1974–75 were made *with the complete approval* of Mr. Herbert W.

Armstrong. I have, on record, proof from their own writings—in most cases, above the signatures of those involved.

Further, it was designated as "the new dimension of the Work." A work which, indeed, could not be compared to anything ever done in the history of humankind. It was unique. There was absolutely no way to justify it Biblically.

Since Christ initiated the work to be done from His own day up to His actual Second Coming, we cannot help but wonder why He made no mention of such a "new Work." For, the plain truth is this: He said His servants would be proclaiming the *same message* the Father had given Him—He, in turn, gave it to the original apostles. It was the same message which would be revealed, subsequently, to every era of time in which a Work was to be done (Matt. 28:19–20). The strong emphasis in this prophecy is the fact there would be *no change* of message, at any time—from Jesus' own day until His Second Coming. When we bear this in mind, the admission of a change by the Worldwide Church of God leadership is clear evidence that what once was the Work of God is no longer His. For, either one message or the other has to be wrong. Did the prophecy of Jesus Christ—that the *same* message would be proclaimed until His Second Coming—fail? Or did the one who was called, in the last days, to proclaim that message—that which is Biblically provable—fail to proclaim it faithfully?

Loud and long claims—that the same Gospel of the Kingdom of God is being proclaimed today—cannot alter the facts. For, can one both change and be the same, at one and the same time? Usage of the term, "Gospel of the Kingdom of God," is no evidence in itself. Many "ministers" make the same claim. The real proof is the content of the message. It is an undeniable fact, the content of that message as proclaimed by the Worldwide Church of God has dramatically changed. This is a fact which we have observed. And the leaders of the church have admitted it—they have stated they cannot mention the name of Jesus Christ before the kings of the earth. If they had really returned to the original message, instead of just claiming to return, we would be in harmony with them.

The basis of a God-given work never changes. Let us note several Biblical examples.

The Father sent Jesus Christ with a message—the very words He was to proclaim. Christ changed no part of the truth which God gave Him; He was faithful to the end. Faithfulness to God is not evidenced by physical life and continuity of position, but by continuity of message.

Paul was faithful to the message. He knew he could not change any element of it (Gal. 1; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 1 Cor. 15:1–3).

Let me call to your attention the examples of Moses, the apostles, and Abraham. Not once was the message changed. These men were faithful to the message which God had given.

In contrast, God's servant of the last days changed! He changed the message. He admitted this was a necessity for justifying the "new dimension of the Work." And we all have observed it. No amount of argumentation will change the facts as they really are. What we elect individually to believe will not alter those facts. When the message was changed, the Work was changed!

### **Chosen Instrument Never Turned from His Work?**

"But the man [Moses] God had prepared in advance . . . was never allowed by God to go wrong" (*The Worldwide News*, June 25, 1979, article "What God Never Did—Never Will—Allow To Happen"). Again, "Jesus Christ appointed Peter chief apostle to Israel, and Paul chief apostle to the Gentiles. . . . neither was allowed by CHRIST to turn wrong—though some under them did turn wrong" (same article).

Why does the author attempt to justify wrong by isolating events in the lives of those to whom reference is made? Why not take the *whole* of their lives and carefully consider the entirety of the factors involved?

Was Moses restrained by God from going wrong? Or, rather, did he exercise character and thereby remain faithful? And, just what was the basis of his faithfulness?

Indeed, Moses was called by God and trained for the work to be performed. He was commissioned by God! He knew exactly what he was to perform. But Moses' faithfulness was not the result of God's *preventing* him from turning. Administratively, he made mistake after mistake and had to be censured by God. But he always repented and became a better servant. In truth, he remained faithful because he willed to be obedient and did not change the message. In spite of this, he was not allowed to complete the work required. Joshua completed it. Because of a very costly and injurious mistake, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. The Bible clearly says that is why he was denied the right to cross Jordan.

Likewise, Peter was faithful because he did not change the Truth but diligently carried out the responsibility which God had given him. He was not put in a fence—restrained—by God. He was allowed to make several mistakes, but he always repented. He turned back to God and more fervently did the work to which he was called. But, at no time did Peter change the message and design a new work. He was faithful, not because of continuity in office or responsibility, but because he honored and respected the Word given to him. When he was confronted by the Apostle Paul, he did not justify himself. He remained faithful to the truth which God had actually revealed through him.

To say, or even imply, Peter was faithful because God would not allow him to be otherwise is absolutely false! Where is character? Is God partial? Of course not! Peter could turn from the Truth, just as could any other chosen vessel. But he elected, of his own volition, to remain faithful. And he was faithful because he did not turn from the way of life originally delivered to him.

John wrote of the apostles and their association with Jesus (1 John 1:1–5; 2:24–29). The message which they received *at the beginning* is precisely what they honored to the end. They taught the chosen of God to honor this message which they first received. The honesty and verity of the *last-day* servant of God would be greatly augmented if *he* were to return to that way and encourage all chosen of God to do the same thing.

Was it possible for Paul to depart from "the faith once delivered"? He seemed to think so (1 Cor. 9:27). It was a definite possibility because God did not restrict him. But Paul kept himself in check at all times, having firmly resolved to obey God and to be faithful to the message which God had given him.

Is any deception involved in this present, vain effort to justify continuation of the physical Body? Why take the examples of faithful servants of God—those who were faithful to the message which they personally and individually willed to obey—and make such vain attempts to justify continuity of organization, when all know the truth originally given has been changed? There is not one example of God's approving a servant who remained in office—the leader of a God-given responsibility—but who turned from the originally revealed doctrine and either personally made, or authorized others to make, changes. The Bible clearly shows, in all examples, that faithful servants are those who are *loyal to the message* which God gives. That factor makes implicit sense. For, it seems hardly conceivable that God would call a servant and commission him to perform a specific work, only to find that the message delivered needed revision in midstream. How utterly contrary to the integrity of God!

Let the last-day servant of God admit the scope of his error; repent as did David, Moses, and Peter; and return to the unalterable Word initially delivered. Then peace, integrity, and the blessings of God would be restored. We would hastily effect a harmonious relationship with our estranged brothers and sisters—from whom we are separated because of doctrinal changes, administrative abuses, and prophetic assumptions. More later, relative to this principle.

### **Basis of Faithfulness: The Message (Truth), Not a Work**

Who are false prophets? Who are false ministers? Is loyalty to a "Work" the premise for determining faithfulness to God? Or, is the revealed Truth—the Word, which God has *always* made known *before* He ever commissioned a servant—the only acceptable basis for judgment?

If the physical dimension of a "Work" is the basis of faithfulness to God, how can one ever determine a false prophet? Or a false minister? From the beginning of the Bible to the end, we are informed clearly and emphatically that the only basis for *any* judgment is the *Word*—the Word which must be initially revealed to called and chosen servants, who in turn give to God's chosen a knowledge of His will.

Let us consider a few "what ifs"!

What if Moses had decided to change the message God gave to him? Would he have been a faithful servant of God? What if he had conceived an idea of a "new Work"? What if he had made concessions to the Gentile nations with whom he came into contact? Would all these possibilities have been acceptable to God? For those who are inclined to answer affirmatively, perhaps a careful study of the book of Judges would be illuminating.

What if Christ had changed the message which God the Father gave to Him? Was Christ's faithfulness to office and/or responsibility? Or, did He clearly indicate loyalty to the message—the very words with which He was endowed by the Father?

What about the apostles? Was their faithfulness judged by continuation of office and claim of apostleship? Indeed not! Many texts state abundantly and implicitly they were faithful to *the message*—the message given them at the beginning (1 John 1, 2).

False prophets are those who *turned from the message* and arrogated to themselves the "right" to alter it to suit themselves. On the other hand, faithful prophets are those who

faithfully carried out the instructions of God. The proof of their fidelity was adherence to the unalterable and unchanging nature of the message—the words which God had given to them (Jer. 23).

The faithfulness of Paul was judged by loyalty to the message (Gal. 1). He knew that he, or even angels, *could not change* the message of God.

Again, why does one presume to use the example of doctrinal faithfulness on the part of certain Biblical servants as justification for belief that a physical organization can do no wrong—when the whole message has been drastically altered or changed? Can we not be instructed by Biblical example?

Paul did say he became all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22). But for what reason? That he might gain them—see them respond to the unchanging Gospel. In no way is there even a remote implication he changed the truth with which God had entrusted him, or even lessened its impact upon the hearers. This fact is made very clear in several other sections of his writings.

What, then, did Paul mean by the statement? In areas of *physical* relationships which were not contrary to God's Law, he attempted to become a conformist. He did not isolate himself by attitude, custom, or any other factor—of a physical nature—which was not in violation of the unerring Truth of God. Why not? Because the intent of Paul was to bring them to the Gospel. Hypocrisy will never achieve that objective. He could not have mitigated spiritual responsibility by emphasizing physical conformity in *opposition* to the Gospel, and still be successful in preaching the unalterable nature of God's way of life. No, Paul simply made physical adjustments where necessary. He became as one who was poor, to gain those in such circumstances. He became a Jew, to gain Jews to the Gospel. He became as a Gentile, to allay fears and gain them to the cause for which he was commissioned. But the unalterable force of the way of life to which Paul was called remained unabated.

### **Chosen Messengers Cannot Go Astray—Turn Aside?**

Such a concept is utterly contrary to everything revealed in the purpose of God. Where is character involved in such coercion on the part of God? If the purpose of God can be achieved by coercion and restraint, and God is not partial, why did He not forcefully bring all humankind to the same level of obedience? All could have been saved without exercising will and character.

Anyone can turn from the will of God! Faithfulness is a matter of spiritually understanding, then exercising the character necessary to resist the temptations of carnal nature—rather than turning back from the will of God to one's own will.

The examples of Moses, Christ, the apostles, Paul, and Abraham are frequently pointed to as examples of faithfulness. Indeed, they were until death the servants of God! But, for what reason? Were they *compelled* to remain faithful? Or, did they will by the help of God's Holy Spirit to resist the temptations of flesh and religiously adhere to spiritual purpose?

Every servant of God who is mentioned in the Bible as an example of faithfulness remained so because of will. The implication of coerced obedience does violence to every spiritual principle of the Bible. The lives of these Biblical characters are recorded for the very purpose of showing human weaknesses; trials and tests; true, genuine, heartfelt repentance; and an all-absorbing love of the Truth which they had been given.

By faith we accept the fact Jesus Christ has qualified to assume total responsibility in the establishment of a world-ruling order, governed by the totality of the Law of God. Yet, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write that there are conditions involved in this responsibility. Why? Because the fact is not "fait accompli"—that is, volition or will on the part of Christ is yet involved (see 1 Cor. 15:24–29). By faith we know it will be done. He qualified and proved Himself. He was not forced or compelled. He willed to obey and to be faithful to His Father's purpose.

The examples of Moses, Abraham, the twelve apostles, Paul, and Christ are cited frequently. They are prime examples of faithful obedience. Why? Because they willed to crucify the self and live in obedience to the will of God. But what is most interesting is this: The examples of leaders who did go astray, lose faith, and turn away from the Truth are never cited.

What of the failures of men such as Eli, Saul, Solomon, and Judas? These men held primary responsibilities. They were set and established in office by God. They knew and understood the Truth, initially. But circumstances and their own carnal natures got in the way. They failed! Failed even though they were called specifically and empowered by God, as were the faithful examples cited, and had every reason to be faithful. However, they were unable to handle the position, power, and physical blessings of God.

Chosen servants of God, bearing great responsibility, have left examples both of success and of *failure*. Thus, success or failure is a matter of determination! How? By the

only guideline ever advocated in the Bible. Whatever the office or responsibility, these servants were to be tried and proven by the *Word of God* which had been given to them. Reason, the Bible, and common sense tell us God would not call and commission a special servant whom He had not first trained and to whom He had not given the message to be proclaimed. How derelict will some try to make God?

Those faithful servants of the Bible were successful, to the end, for two reasons: 1) They individually willed to be obedient, and 2) they were faithful to the message given. The failures are given as examples of unfaithfulness to the commission and yielding to carnal tendencies.

Apostles, prophets, and ministers—as well as lay members—can go astray (turn from the Truth). But *not one example* is given of any "turncoat" who recognized and admitted his plight. In every example, each stoutly defended himself and did not effect the repentance necessary to return to the Truth.

The obligation of determination is upon you (1 John 4:1–3; Deut. 13:1–5; Matt. 24:3–13, 23–28; Matt. 7:15–29). Running, hiding, rejecting all, or electing to pursue a "wait and see" attitude will avail you nothing. The call of God is without repentance. Every servant of His has been called. And as a meaningful test, He has allowed the state of confusion—doctrinal and otherwise—which prevails today. Your only guiding light out of the maze of confusion is the truth which you accepted at the beginning.

The claims of doctrinal "correcting" are long and compelling! But, where are the "changes" back to the *whole* truth originally taught? They simply do not exist! Claims are one thing, but establishment by fact is quite another.

At any age, one can turn from the way of God. In fact, the most significant examples of "failure" are those whose departures occurred later in life. Length of physical endurance and ravages of age do adversely affect most. It is an incontrovertible fact.

In the same context of the above theme we are told, "God never yet has let one through whom He STARTED a great project turn wrong—and He has never yet let such an appointed leader of His die until his job was FINISHED!" The major presumption is that a servant of God knows the end from the beginning of his responsibility. But, with few exceptions, the real servants of God had no idea of the length of their work. They had not the slightest notion of the time involved for the end of their responsibility.

In the case of Christ, He knew the appointed time of His end. But in the case of the Apostle Paul, he only in a general sense realized the time of his end had come. Other than those two, there are no Biblical examples of prophets, apostles, or ministers who specifically knew the appointed end.

Certainly, Moses did not know. If we take the Bible literally, he was cut short of what otherwise might have been a longer responsibility. Because impatience with the people caused him to react emotionally and thereby sin against God, he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. It was Joshua who completed the work which Moses had begun.

When does a Work cease? There is absolutely nothing, in all the Bible, which gives any specific clues. However, we may fairly judge by the examples recorded. *First*, if God has predetermined a length and duration for a mission, it will end at the appointed time. The Bible records only one specific example, and hints at the possibility of a second which falls into that category. In all other cases, if there was a foreordained time, God alone knew it. *Second*, nearly the whole of human history strongly indicates the conclusion of a Work occurred progressively as Truth was rejected, resulting in the loss of divine guidance and inspiration.

The nations of Israel and Judah continued physically. Therefore, the continuation of the physical body of a human head is not an acceptable proof of God's stamp of approval. In like manner, one might ask at what time the New Testament church ceased to function as the Body of Christ. It continued physically, for the true servants of God were put out of it. Yet, at some point in time it ceased to exist as the real, spiritual Body of Christ—and that point in time was earlier than could be physically observed.

Therefore, any assumption that God's Work has not come to a conclusion is, at best, guessing. This is the case unless He has revealed a definite time of conclusion. The Bible reveals no such specific, predetermined time in the last days. Any claim or assumption that a specific Work has not terminated, in the last days, is a mere guess and in all probability an attempt to justify present behavior. There most certainly is no clear and precise designation in the Bible. Any attempt to correlate the termination of the general proclamation of the Gospel (Matt. 28:19–20) and the Second Coming of Christ is, at best, assumption. In fact, an overall application of the prophecies relevant to that day almost certainly indicates an earlier termination of that final Work of the last days. For, it seems almost ludicrous to believe that a *general* proclamation of the Gospel—whereby people hear, repent, and are baptized—is occurring at the same time major warning messages are being uttered (Matt. 24:14).

## Only Those Within Can Depart?

" . . . In all this world's history God has never started an important Work or special activity through a chosen human, and then, after that special accomplishment is well advanced, allowed His chosen human leader to be overthrown by Satan—or in any way turn false!"

Apparently, the author of that quote has forgotten his Bible.

Continuing: "Yet those promoted high within that Work or special activity for God have been allowed to run false, against God's chosen leader" (*The Worldwide News*, June 25, 1979, article "What God Never Did—Never Will—Allow To Happen").

Does God practice favoritism? Is He partial? The above quotes would make it seem that God cannot be trusted! If one can just get oneself into a primary responsibility, God will not allow that person to turn from the Truth. Yet, if he assumes any lesser station in life, he bears the brunt of test and faithfulness.

What a weird concept! In two ways, it is glaringly wrong. First, it makes God a respecter of persons. Second, it denies the total requirement of building character—character which demands freedom of choice. The *TOP* man would need no character—for, he is not allowed to go astray. However, all those below him must make choices—always choosing the right if they desire to inherit life. If such a circumstance were true, the conditions within the domain of heavenly purpose would be absolutely no different than those found in another kingdom—a kingdom of this world.

The Bible clearly shows that *any man* can fail. And the example of Solomon makes it very plain that when one fails to exercise all the principles of character, even unusual knowledge and wisdom will not prevent one from falling away from the Truth. The pride of power, prestige, and wealth destroyed this number-one being. Further, he was the victim of all his base, carnal, human weaknesses. Sex and alcohol ruined him. As a result of his own shortcomings—and frustrations due to the knowledge he possessed—he turned to hate, brutality, arrogance, verbal abuse, and slander toward those over whom he had a charge. Such conduct is always indicative of personal guilt. *Today*, as also in the past, it makes little difference!

Can those second in responsibility turn? Indeed! Just as one first in responsibility can. It is all a matter of will. God will restrain no one. Logic tells us that the greater the

authority and responsibility one bears, the greater the character which must be exercised. This principle is given many ways in the Bible! Yet, if we are to believe the above quote, the exact opposite must be true.

Aaron and Miriam sinned! There is no question about that. How? Did they resist Moses because he turned from the Truth which God had given to him? How ridiculous! Their sin was a result of objecting to what they felt were personal problems of Moses. They did not like his marriage to the Ethiopian woman. As a result of this feeling, they presumed to arrogate responsibility to themselves. The whole affair had nothing to do with the truth which had been given—unless Moses' marriage itself was a mistake.

How totally different from *our* actions today! We were put out of the physical Body because we would not accept the doctrinal changes—changes which presumably are being rectified at the present time. If those changes are wrong presently, were they not wrong initially? Wrong (sin) is wrong regardless of the time! Why, then, should we be implicated categorically with others who accepted all those changes? Could deception be intended?

Any attempt to condemn us by using the example of Aaron and Miriam is either calculated to mislead and deceive others or is gross ignorance of what happened.

But, what about Korah?

He rebelled against the authority of God. He reasoned that since all the people of Israel were holy, Moses and Aaron had appropriated both physical and spiritual offices to themselves.

Within the whole account, there is not one single mention—or even a slight hint—that doctrine or the Truth of God was the basis of this altercation. These men of renown, within the nation of Israel, had decided they had an equal right to assume the high offices of authority held by Aaron and Moses. God supernaturally intervened to manifest His will. Please read the *whole* account for yourself (Num. 16).

Where, in all the account of Korah, is there any justification for the leader (number-one man) to assume the right to *change the Truth of God*—even if he is derelict in handling his job and allows outside forces, desirous of effecting changes for very evil purposes, to influence him? Where is any example to show that God's chosen people must change doctrine—the Truth and the way of life—so that they may honor a human head while, at the same time, disrespecting God altogether?

*Who* was the leader of God's people in our day is *NOT* the issue! It never has been. The meaningful question is: Does a leader of God's people have a right to change the revealed way and assume a responsibility superior to that of God? Further, once a leader becomes derelict and changes the way of life, do the people lose all God-given responsibility (Deut. 13:1–5)—thereby being required to do whatever the human head says? Those are the key questions!

Those key questions are not answered in the story of Korah! Also consider the examples of Cain, Balaam, Eli, Solomon, Jeroboam, and many others. These were servants who once knew the Truth and were chosen by God, but then—because of human arrogance—turned from God and from the Truth. The factors in their lives fit the example of today. They had the Truth! In process of time, they felt they had the right to *change*—or authorize others to change—that way of life.

Could deception be intended when one uses examples of faithful servants—faithful to the message, the revealed Truth—to justify one's own cause and compel others to remain loyal to organization and the human head, instead of the originally revealed Truth? The Biblical examples show that faithful servants—Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Christ, the twelve apostles, Paul, and others—were faithful because they remained loyal to the message. Rebellious servants were those who *turned from the revealed message*, yet stoutly maintained their own integrity and in most cases continued in the physical office for a considerable time following their departure from Truth.

By *candid admission*, the church of the last days departed from the doctrine. For, why should one *attempt* to get the Body back *on* the track doctrinally, if it was not off the track? That admission speaks loud and clear and is a witness against the people for what they *should have done* (Deut. 13:1–5; 1 John 4:1–3). Yet, most of God's people are so spiritually drugged, lethargic, and indifferent that even such a candid admission avails nothing. Most will continue to sleep until the day in which God arises to shake the earth mightily and to bring them back to their senses—by the Great Tribulation.

### **Prophesied for the Last Days?**

Frequently, members of the Worldwide Church of God are told how that Work was prophesied for the last days. We wholeheartedly agree. We have said the same thing, from the beginning of our endeavor. Our purpose is to feed the "bleating" sheep and to help them remain faithful to *Jesus Christ*. This can be done only by faithfulness to the message, the Word. No other group, to our knowledge, has taught and attempted to live by the entirety of the Word of God (Matt. 4:4).

Now, the question arises: Why such great emphasis upon the existence of a prophetic work in the last days (Matt. 28:19–20), when there is a total overlooking or rejecting of the equally significant prophecy that the same body would apostatize (2 Thess. 2:1–3; Jude; 2 Pet. 2; 1 Tim. 4:1–3; 2 Tim. 3:1–8)? How can we so emphatically believe the one prophecy and reject the other? God's Word stands sure! No part of it will fail. The body which once taught the Truth did indeed apostatize!

How is apostasy introduced and accomplished? First, let us understand that an individual's departing from the visible Body does not necessarily *produce* apostasy. Many Bible examples show how apostasy occurs at the top. Then, apostates—by using their position, power, and authority—lead the whole people, with the exception of a few here and there, into error. And in no case does the Bible indicate that an apostate body returns to the Truth before some major intervention on the part of God. On the contrary, it is the horrible tribulation of the last days that will bring the called of God back to the true fold—the unchanging Body of Jesus Christ.

We, because we hold fast to the very truth which Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong taught, are accused of destroying the Work. Mr. Armstrong says: "All are trying to DESTROY the very WORK OF GOD they once sought to support, as they climbed the ladder of success!" (Ibid).

Never in our lives did we support what is now being called the Work. Because of a physical organization, the reader's mind is subtly led to believe the *past* Work of God is the same as the *present* Work. What an insidious deception! The Work—the proclamation of the Truth of God, by which you and I were called—is *not now extant*. What is transpiring today is, in most respects, very different.

What *was* the genuine *Work of God*, the called servant of God himself destroyed! In fact, we have on tape that very admission. For, he said that if he changed the doctrines—Pentecost, divorce and remarriage, tithing, and others—the church would no longer be the Church of God, nor would the Work be God's Work. He was absolutely right! For, from that time on, the Body began to disintegrate. Since he authorized all the major doctrinal changes, he bears the responsibility for destroying the very work which God built through him. Blaming it, now, on an uninspired doctrinal committee will not change that fact.

The above article asks, "And now WHERE ARE THEY?" Brethren, and all who will hear, we are exactly where we stood at the time the genuine Truth originally was taught. But let us ask: Is honesty and character manifested in the subtle intent to link us with others

who have accepted all the changes and, for one reason or another, are separated from the Body? Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong ought to know we are not even remotely associated with those who have sought to change the doctrines. He ought to know we are not aggressively attempting to destroy anything. The only possible rationale behind this accusation is substantiation of the self.

Today, we still hold to that truth which was originally revealed—that which Mr. Armstrong taught over forty long years. And our efforts are singularly directed toward those who are confused, bewildered, and troubled—those who are *asking* for help. Our efforts are intended to keep these people strong in "the faith once delivered." And Mr. Armstrong ought to know that fact very well. But does he dare admit it to the people?

While in Pasadena—from June 1972 to November 1973—I attempted to uphold Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, while many of the ministers were seeking for opportunity to bring about doctrinal changes. Yet, when the chips were down, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong backed down and supported those who were seeking changes. How can he honestly claim ignorance of the happenings of those days? No! He *knew* what was going on—in most of the major areas. And the very fact that no real, basic doctrines have been changed back to the original, revealed Truth is an indication that what is transpiring presently is a mere play on words—a play calculated to influence the gullible and deceived.

Who, then, really destroyed "the Work"?

There is no Work of God unless God reveals the Truth and commissions a servant! The Work of God in the last days is an obvious manifestation of the initial revelation of Truth. The Work—the one which was of God—was destroyed when the initial Truth was altered! Who allowed and even endorsed, for the most part, the change? That party, and no other, is *primarily* responsible for the destruction of the Work. The facts themselves speak, for anyone who can think logically or is aware of circumstances, happenings, and conditions in the church from 1972 to 1975.

The one who received the Truth is the one who, for whatever the reasons, turned from that Truth! Can anyone deny that fact?

How?

He rejected the truth which he had taught for over forty years. He turned to "scholars" for his authority, instead of to the Spirit of the Ever-living God. He *approved* the doctrinal committee, established to review doctrine which God had revealed. Finally, though much

has been said about straightening out doctrine, little if anything has been done. The church, without the Spirit of God, continues to crumble daily. If not, may we dare ask why the leadership continually talks about the destruction of the Work? That concern speaks for itself!

There is much now being written about reorienting the church—setting it back on track doctrinally and in other respects. Yet, the Bible clearly indicates that the church of the last days which departs from the Truth will not be spiritually realigned until the Great Tribulation. There is absolutely no indication that the church will be enlivened again by human efforts.

God surely must be grieved greatly by the fact that the man whom He greatly loved and placed in high responsibility *turned from the Truth* as did Solomon, Eli, and others. We believe we know how God must feel. Though we bore some responsibility when we attempted to support God's servant of the last days, in order to keep alive the faith once delivered, we were set aside in preference to those willing to change. Yet, brethren, it is our love for God, for His Son Jesus Christ, for the unalterable Truth, and for the chosen, last-day servant, which compels us to continue in the Truth today. To do any less would be to reject God and His Son Jesus Christ.

### **Few Remain Faithful**

The trial of faith is necessary (1 Pet. 1:3–9). It is essential so that God may know who is approved (1 Cor. 11:19).

In the final analysis, how many will truly remain faithful—find the way to everlasting life? The Bible clearly tells us that the number who will be successful in arriving at the acceptable goal is few indeed (Matt. 7:13–14). Most will continue to subscribe to either a man or the visible church. Or, a much-too-great number will turn away from the Truth altogether.

The regathering of all those scattered sheep will commence during the Tribulation. But, how much better to exercise faith *NOW!* To remember the past confidence and trust which we had in God. Whoever those faithful servants are, they are promised an escape from the coming horrible holocaust of the last days.

## The Just Shall Live by Faith

Your hope of protection and salvation is not predicated on any mental capability to study and figure out the physical whys and wherefores of all the distressing church activities of the last days. Faith in God is your only hope of confidence, true spiritual orientation, and the promised protection.

That faith was, and is, expressed in the *doctrine*—the truth revealed. It is called "the faith." Harken back to your call, the promises you made at baptism, and the joys of your beginning. Use that confidence as the basis for your study, and you will be truly amazed at the results. But undertake the purpose of "re-proving" all things, and you will be hopelessly bewildered and confused. For, God gave you the faith to believe the revealed Truth. That faith is delivered only once. If you question it, you will be sure to lose your confidence and direction.

In conclusion, brethren, act upon that faith once given. You are doomed to despair, doubt, and uncertainty, unless you *return* to that original faith. For, that faith was a priceless gift from God. Therefore, reactivate that FAITH. Stand tall and firm in that faithful resolve. It is your *only hope*, regardless of what men may say or do.

We will pray for you. But, only you can make that personal, individual resolve. May God help you always. Please take care and be praying for one another.

All our love, thoughts, and prayers,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the text "All our love, thoughts, and prayers,".

Raymond C. Cole