

Church of God, The Eternal

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The History of "Human Potential" in God's Church

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Dear Brethren:

Anyone with a history in the Worldwide Church of God going back twenty years or more is probably very familiar with the term "human potential." Although surfacing sporadically in the 1960s, it really only caught hold in the early 1970s and then ultimately became part of the title of one of Mr. Armstrong's books in 1978—*The Incredible Human Potential*. From that time forward, "human potential" became the term of choice for many to summarize our hope for salvation in God's Kingdom.

At the same time, because this remnant body—Church of God, The Eternal—formed in 1975 (we were forced out of the Worldwide Church of God because we were not allowed to continue keeping God's true day of Pentecost on Monday after 1973, and were required to accept a change in the doctrine of divorce and remarriage which was an abomination), our earliest members missed most of the "human potential" years of the 1970s (let alone the final chaos of the late 1980s and 1990s after Mr. Armstrong died). Therefore the question sometimes arises, what do we think about this term "human potential"? Is it a good way to talk about God's plan for man's salvation, or is it something that should make us wary? The answer to that question will provide the means to review some interesting history about the chaotic events of the 1970s within God's true church, and to arm God's people with the means to discern some important principles we previously may never have considered.

History of "Human Potential" in God's Church

There certainly may have been many earlier uses of the phrase, but one from the August 1961, *The Plain Truth* is the oldest reference we have been able to find by quick review. Here is Mr. Herbert Armstrong's statement from his *Heart to Heart Talk With the Editor*:

I knew what was wrong! It was a combination of ignorance of the real PURPOSE of life—of the human potential in The Eternal Creator's Plan—the lack of any PURPOSE in life that should arouse ambition . . .

After 1961 we are able to find a few similar phrases in periodic writings, like Mr. Armstrong's use of "potential destiny" and "man's potential" in his *Personal from the Editor* (June 1964, *The Plain Truth*). But even these are few and far between until we get to the late 1960s. In his *Personal* from the September 1967, *The Plain Truth*, Mr. Armstrong states:

Now the MOST NECESSARY knowledge every human *needs* to know—if he is to have peace, happiness and abundant well-being—are these things: knowledge of WHY he was born—*why* he was made human—the PURPOSE and meaning of life; knowledge of the human potential and ultimate possibility; knowledge of the true values as distinguished from the false; knowledge of THE CAUSES of peace, happiness, abundant well-being.

Is there anything wrong with using "human potential" to describe our hope of being born into the very Family of God, as revealed to us through the ministry of Mr. Armstrong? Not at all—that is, in the technical sense there is no problem with the term. For those who are educated in that revealed master plan concerning the very reason man was put here upon this earth, it is very accurate to say that our hope is founded in our potential as humans—by God's grace—to be born spiritually into that divine Family. This is the way Mr. Armstrong always used the phrase when it is found in any of his writings.

But why any hesitancy at all to giving an *unqualified* acceptance of the term? Why such a reserved and conditional approval? That answer will be revealed presently, but not before completing our brief history of the rise of "human potential" in church literature.

Even by 1967 the term was still used fairly infrequently and had not caught on in any broad fashion. But beginning in 1968 we find evidence of "human potential" actually being added to older church writings during the process of revision. An example is the original *The Plain Truth* article series, *Seven Laws of Success*, first published in serial fashion in January, April, and June 1961. In the 1968 booklet revision, the following new statement has been added:

IF one could discover such an overall PURPOSE—a definite purpose for which humans were put on earth—*IF* one could discover a human potential greater than mere temporary existence, one would think that PURPOSE would be the goal that should excite dynamic ambition!

Again, "human potential" is used in a very acceptable way to describe our hope for salvation, but this marks the first time we see it beginning to surface more frequently and being

inserted intentionally in revised literature. By the early 1970s, the term is showing up very often, along with certain other variations, like "transcendent potential." Notice this example from the 1972 revision of Mr. Armstrong's February 1962, *The Plain Truth* article entitled, *Just What Do You Mean—Born Again?*:

There is another passage, understood by almost none, that reveals our astonishing transcendent potential! . . . WHY did He put us here on earth? What is the PURPOSE of life—what is our transcendent potential? It is so far above and beyond anything you have thought or imagined, it seems shockingly incredible!

Again, this phrase was not used in the original article, but was added in the revision ten years later. But when did "human potential" really begin to come into more prominent use by both ministry and laity? It was June 1975, with the announcement of a bold new initiative. Let Mr. Armstrong's own words explain, in excerpts from the June 5, 1975, *Co-Worker Letter*:

This is to announce a BRAND-NEW MAGAZINE! It is to fulfill a new and necessary purpose in carrying out our great commission. I want to tell you about it. . . . Some weeks ago I authorized the formation of a new FOUNDATION—named the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. It is non-profit, dedicated to serving humanity worldwide. It has become a necessary adjunct to this new worldwide dimension of getting Christ's TRUE Gospel to the nations through heads of government. . . . This new Foundation is giving us great added prestige, credibility, and favor. It is something NO ONE can CRITICIZE. It doesn't sound "religious." Already it has met with GREAT AND FAVORABLE RESPONSE. . . . And on the heels of this, the TREMENDOUS ANNOUNCEMENT of a new magazine! Under the auspices of the new Foundation, I have just authorized the publication of a NEW MAGAZINE that will go before KINGS! Bi-monthly! It will be the very highest quality magazine in every respect. It will contain in easy-to-understand language articles on the very PURPOSE for human life upon earth, the AWESOME human potential, HOW world PEACE will soon come! It will carry the GOSPEL MESSAGE in the same PLAIN and UNDERSTANDABLE LANGUAGE I use personally in speaking with world leaders, heads of government, and their top officials. It will reveal what science cannot, what religion has not, what education doesn't teach. It will have a larger size page, fully-illustrated, in full-color. . . . The title? What could be better than HUMAN POTENTIAL? Developing our incredible human potential is what the KINGDOM OF GOD is all about! It is the REASON we are alive on earth!

***Human Potential* and the AICF—God's Work?**

So we find that "human potential" was made an institutional phrase in God's church by the announcement of a new magazine sponsored by a new cultural foundation intended to facilitate the spread of Christ's gospel to the world through exposure to national heads-of-state around the globe. Let us analyze the fundamental principles underlying this 1975 initiative of the Worldwide Church of God, and see whether it was indeed the will of God in fulfilling last-day prophecy.

First, if it was authorized and sponsored by God, was it a success? No it was not. The magazine's name changed to *Quest* in 1977, and was ultimately discontinued altogether in 1981. Here is Mr. Armstrong's retrospective assessment from the April 24, 1981, *Co-Worker Letter*:

I have given him firm instructions to either sell or close out Quest magazine within 90 days. Although Quest is probably the finest quality of secular magazines in the United States, it has been wholly secular. I agreed to start it originally with the understanding that it would contain at least one article by me per issue, carrying Christ's Message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in each issue. But its editors were entirely hostile to the idea of any such articles appearing. When finally I insisted on an article I wrote about the Mt. Sinai Peace project, the three or four top editors resigned. We then appointed Mr. Gillenson as managing editor. Quest has been a high quality secular magazine. But God has not called us to enter the commercial magazine business in the secular world. I'm sure many of our people will be very happy that we are getting rid of it.

Why and how did this all come about? Here is a summary from the *Wikipedia* online encyclopedia which accurately reflects information verifiable from historical church documents:

Quest magazine was originally conceived under the name of *Human Potential* and it was conceived by attorney Stanley Rader as the secular publication of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation funded by the Worldwide Church of God. The publishers hired a professional staff unrelated to the church in order to create a high quality glossy magazine devoted to the humanities, travel and the arts which were also a feature of the Ambassador Auditorium on the campus of Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. . . . It was because AICF, through its activities such as the publication of *Quest* magazine, seemed to represent the exact opposite of the views and values of its ultimate sponsor that the Worldwide Church was increasing [*sic*] involved in splits and divisions among its ranks. These defections created dramatic losses in income for the church which in turn undermined the sponsored activities of AICF.

So it would appear God never sponsored this project, or it would not have failed. And is there any wonder, given that the very premise of the *Human Potential* magazine and the AICF itself is totally inconsistent with the way God works? It was a totally secular project, intended to make the church look more acceptable to the world. But how can those who stand to represent God's Truth ever be acceptable in Satan's world?

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:18–19).

Notice more evidence of this diabolical concept which had crept into God's church, pandering to find approval and the acceptance of deceived human beings.

Some weeks ago I authorized the formation of a new foundation—the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF). It is nonprofit, dedicated to serving humanity worldwide. It has become a necessary adjunct to this new world-wide dimension of getting Christ's true gospel to the nations through heads of government. Within the scope of AICF, we are participating in humanitarian projects in several areas of the world. Some of the more publicized activities you are undoubtedly already familiar with—the archaeological excavations at Jerusalem, the International Cultural Center for Youth, explorations with King Leopold III of Belgium, etc. All provide important opportunities for demonstrating our concern for all nations. And the Foundation—with its message of universal understanding and hope—is receiving greater prestige and favor than we had hoped. It is truly becoming a wonderful tool for getting the Work done (June 18, 1975, *Co-Worker Letter*).

The new Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF) is something of a public sensation all over southern California. It has completely put Ambassador College, the Worldwide Church of God and God's Work in a NEW IMAGE (July 20, 1975, *Co-Worker Letter*).

Whose Work Was Accomplished?

Since when did God's faithful servants ever receive accolades from the world in the course of representing Jesus Christ?

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my

saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me (John 15:20–21).

Yet Mr. Armstrong was received around the world by the elites of governments and of business, and not just allowed, but *accepted* in their circles. How was this possible, if the uncalled masses under Satan's sway despise and hate the Truth? It is because the hard-hitting truth was not really being preached to those kings, prime ministers, presidents, or business leaders. Instead, Mr. Armstrong was using a nebulous message about the need for a major change in world affairs that would ultimately bring peace to the troubled world, but he was not being specific in using the name of Jesus Christ, or warning these leaders that Christ was soon coming to remove them from office through violent overthrow, to take control in great wrath, and to institute the Ten Commandments, statutes and judgments on this earth as the new rule of law.

No, they never received that message. The people who read *The Plain Truth* magazine and heard *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast certainly heard that message, but not those world leaders who "opened their doors" to Mr. Armstrong's visits. And although Mr. Armstrong did not realize it at the time, rather than fulfilling a holy commission of God, he was actually being used by others as an instrument to facilitate Satan's counterfeit scheme to unify the nations through Babylon the Great! Notice this unholy fraternization with Babylon as described by himself:

The entire meeting [with Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin], lasting perhaps 45 minutes, was warm and friendly. We spoke about the two jet planes that have more or less "commuted" between Jerusalem and Cairo, and he was candid in telling us of Secretary Kissinger's peace accomplishments. He was very appreciative of my efforts toward WORLD PEACE, and especially in bringing nations like Japan and Israel closer together—also Kenya and Israel; and my friendships with Arab chiefs-of-state; and efforts toward a better approach to harmony and understanding between them and Israel. Actually there has been a slight lessening of tensions between some of my Arab friends—heads of governments—and Israel. And through the AICF we are supporting the ICCY (International Cultural Center for Youth) directed by Minister of Tourism Moshe Kol—bringing about a new and friendly relationship between Israeli and Arab youth, especially in Jerusalem (August 19, 1976, *Co-Worker Letter*).

Mr. Armstrong became seduced by the notion that gaining favor with the movers and shakers of the earth would facilitate God's commission to take the Gospel to the world in preparation for Christ's return. But all along, he was espousing a message that actually appealed to the agents of Satan—including most of these very world leaders—who were seeking to bring about *their own* diabolical version of the Millennium, under the guise of humanitarian reform and efforts to foster peace and understanding between nations. Is that how peace will come to this

world? Or were we not taught by Mr. Armstrong that the only peace this world will ever achieve will be under the direct rule of Jesus Christ as King of Kings?

We have much research material confirming the real motives behind this world's humanitarian organizations, which are nothing but pawns in a mission to solve the world's problems *without God!* It is Satanic, because their efforts *deny* the only true solution to man's problems. Many of them may be very sincere in their desire to eliminate hunger, disease, war, and every other ill plaguing humanity today, but they will never succeed through use of their own faulty wisdom. Is that not what Mr. Armstrong always taught us? How then did God's church become entangled, in the 1970s, in the very work of deception we were supposed to have rejected upon conversion? We believe Mr. Armstrong was innocent in his intent, but it is now plain to see that the fruit of that entire "work" to visit world leaders was never of God. And the AICF and *Human Potential* magazine were never part of God's true work either. Notice Mr. Armstrong's own admission:

When this Work has PLEASED GOD, He has prospered us and the Work has GROWN steadily. When the Work does not please God it DOES NOT GROW! From 1968 through 1978 THE CHURCH AND ITS WORK CEASED ITS GROWTH. Those were the years I was away proclaiming the Gospel in nations all over the earth (Revelation 10:11) and my son was in executive administrative charge at Pasadena. In those years the Work, especially in the United States, DID NOT GROW! (*Worldwide News—Special Edition*, March 1981).

Interestingly, Mr. Armstrong concluded that the cause of God's displeasure for the lack of growth from 1968 to 1978 was all his son's doing. He never considered that his own time spent visiting kings was just as displeasing to God. Garner Ted Armstrong's serious problems surfaced in the early 1970s, but the liberal chaos he promoted might never have happened if his father had been focused on shoring up the foundation of truth within the church, rather than spending 300 days a year overseas with world leaders. It was Mr. Armstrong's "new direction" to begin visiting world dignitaries in 1968 which actually opened the church up to serious vulnerability, and that very year the growth immediately began to decline:

Since 1968 God began opening doors through seemingly unusual circumstances for personal meetings with kings, presidents, and leaders in education, commerce, and industry. It was absolutely providential. Many came to have a warm, and even affectionate, feeling toward me. At first I didn't understand WHY this was happening. But I did know it was God's doing. For doors were opening miraculously and the warmth of their feeling toward me was far beyond normal (June 1975, *Co-Worker Letter*).

Is it really certain that this "warmth of feeling" from Satan's worldly representatives was God's doing? Again, look at the long-term fruits of those visits. How did any of those meetings with world leaders ever further the true work of God? They did not! It is more likely that God allowed Satan access to provide these "open doors" in 1968 as a test for the entire church, and as a way to facilitate the very fulfillment of that prophesied apostasy God promised would occur (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

These events in 1968 began just a few months after the death of his faithful wife, Loma Armstrong, which probably had more impact upon the church than most begin to realize. She was an incredible anchor to her husband, and it is highly likely that if she had lived, this "new direction" would never have materialized. It was also 1968 when the name of that body was changed from the Radio Church of God to the Worldwide Church of God, and it was the same year that the thirty percent annual growth ceased, never to return. Are all of these events congruous to 1968 really just coincidence?

We believe that Herbert Armstrong was God's chosen servant—an apostle for the last days. But whether he recognized it or not, his commission was to build the Church of the last days, not to fulfill the Elijah commission to warn the world before Christ's return (Matthew 24:14). Those are two very separate commissions—not one and the same. Is this just opinion, or is there proof? For evidence, please see our July 2002, *Monthly Letter*, entitled, *Herbert W. Armstrong—Was He an Apostle and/or the End-Time Elijah?* No matter what mistakes he made or allowed in his old age, we will always respect him highly as the man God used to teach us the Truth, and we never intend to be disrespectful toward him in any way.

Mr. Armstrong became innocently convinced that God wanted him to visit world leaders, but moving in those circles from 1968 forward ultimately caused him to become ashamed of the very church which God had called him to lead. Notice what he said in the June 3, 1975, issue of *The Bulletin*, distributed specifically to ministers in the wake of those announcements about the AICF and the *Human Potential* magazine:

Now about the Foundation and the NEW MAGAZINE. One thing has been a serious handicap, and caused me and my touring team no little embarrassment. We have had to say that we represent either Ambassador College, or Worldwide Church of God. I am regarded as an Ambassador for WORLD PEACE. But if I represent a CHURCH, immediately that shouts to them "RELIGION!" and that sparks prejudice and competitive religious prejudice.

Can any of us imagine one of the prophets of old, including Elijah, ever taking this posture while fulfilling God's will to give a warning message to kings? Have any of the servants God sent to warn the world ever worried about being embarrassed for representing a church, because it would generate prejudice and ridicule among the heathen? Of course not.

Because he thought Christ would return in his lifetime, Mr. Armstrong erroneously concluded he was not only doing the work of an apostle, but that of the end-time Elijah as well.

And brethren, I have to say to you, no one is going to succeed me. God has called me to a job, to a commission. Mr. Rader has said time and again publicly that he doesn't expect anyone to succeed me, that God has never let anyone die until what God has called him to do is completed. I think that when God lets me die, the thing He's called me for will have been completed, preparing the way for the Second Coming of Christ carrying that Gospel of the Kingdom to the world for a witness to all nations (*Worldwide News—Special Edition*, March 6, 1981).

But look at the facts we know today. Jesus Christ *did not* return before Mr. Armstrong died in 1986. The world *did not* receive the dynamic warning God said would occur before His Son's triumphant appearance (Revelation 11:3–7). We are *still* awaiting that work to be done, and it will not be done until *just before* Christ's return, even as John the Baptist did not do his work until *just before* the first coming of Christ. We do not point out these facts to diminish the accomplishments of Mr. Armstrong. God forbid! But God's people need to come to grips with the truth about those divine commissions so they can put all of these historical events into proper context. If Herbert Armstrong was not called by God to do the Elijah work, what was he doing visiting kings? It was not of God! And as we have already shown, the fruits of that particular labor now prove it. Whoever God does call in the future to have that audience with kings will not be recognized by this world as an "Ambassador for WORLD PEACE." No, whoever fulfills that prophecy will be hated and despised, even as was Elijah hated by Ahab and Jezebel, and John the Baptist hated by Herod and the Jewish leaders.

What does all of this have to do with "human potential"? It should provide the context for understanding that the phrase "human potential" became most prominent within the church in conjunction with this ungodly attempt to find acceptance in the world in the mid-1970s. Does that then make the term wrong? Not at all. But consider the following facts as well.

What Does *Human Potential* Mean to the World?

Many of you may not realize that "human potential" is not just a neutral term in this world, but actually conjures a specific concept in mind for many. There is much that could be said about the "human potential movement," but let this summary from the *Wikipedia* online encyclopedia suffice:

The Human Potential Movement came out of the social and intellectual milieu of the 1960s and was formed to promote the cultivation of extraordinary potential believed to be largely untapped in most people. The movement is premised on the

belief that through the development of human potential, humans can experience an exceptional quality of life filled with happiness, creativity, and fulfillment. A corollary belief is often that those who begin to unleash this potential will find their actions within society to be directed towards helping others release their potential. The belief is that the net effect of individuals cultivating their potential will bring about positive social change at large. The movement has its conceptual roots in existentialism and humanism. Its formation was strongly tied to Humanistic psychology, also known as the "3rd force" in psychology (after psychoanalysis and behaviorism, and before the "4th force" of Transpersonal psychology which emphasizes esoteric, psychic, mystical, and spiritual development). It is often considered synonymous with Humanistic psychology. The movement views Abraham Maslow's idea of self actualization as the supreme expression of a human's life.

Anyone in God's church should be able to recognize that this human potential movement as the world views it is totally antithetical to the Truth of God. Satan's version of human potential does not accept that the potential is a *gift* offered by God *through grace* to be born into His divine Family, but instead a "natural" power that exists inherently within every human being to improve his own life and to make the world a better place without the constraints of any god. No wonder it is integrally linked with the occult world of mysticism and humanistic psychology. This was one of the "new religions" of the humanists which sprang up during the rebellious 1960s and became well-ensconced in our society by the early 1970s. Even today, for most, "human potential" automatically conjures the idea of the human capacity *within self* to solve his own problems through tapping a hidden source of power.

Now realizing that these were the popular ideas gaining ground in our world in the 1960s–1970s, consider the following: When the Worldwide Church of God came out with a new magazine called *Human Potential* in 1975, and its purpose was as an extension of the work of the AICF—dedicated to serving humanity worldwide and participating in humanitarian projects to foster peace and reduce strife in the world—how do you think the world interpreted that mission? Would not many have identified the Church with the *human potential movement*, and assumed we were supporters of its anti-God, occult tenets?

So the church becomes involved in a humanitarian outreach effort through the secular AICF, to help relieve the suffering of this world, and the spokesman is an "Ambassador of World Peace," who is welcomed into the great halls of world power, spreading a nebulous message about the human potential soon to be realized, led by the hand of an "unknown power" guiding the events of human history toward a glorious new future.

If you were a king of this world—deceived from birth like all others through Satan's concepts, and without any context from which to understand real truth—how might you interpret

the purpose and message of this "Ambassador"? Would it lead you to a fear and respect of the One True God, and an appreciation for the horrific events soon to occur before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? Or would you be inclined to think this man is "one of us," an insider within the circle of elitists, working to bring about "our own" version of paradise on earth—the Great Whore, Babylon? Is it possible this is what really happened? Is it possible that our concept of "human potential" was grossly misinterpreted by the world and coopted by Satan for his own nefarious purposes?

While the technical phrase—human potential—may be an accurate way to summarize our hope of salvation, Mr. Raymond Cole resisted using the term himself once God used him in founding this remnant body in 1975. To him, it was a term associated with that very dark and dismal time of apostasy within God's church which forced our separation. Are there even more reasons for legitimate aversion to "human potential"? Yes indeed.

The Incredible Human Potential

In 1978, Mr. Armstrong published a book entitled, *The Incredible Human Potential*, intended to summarize the master plan of God for the salvation of humanity. Here is his own description of the book, from the July 25, 1978, *Co-Worker Letter*:

I am now turning over to the printers what I believe to be THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK SINCE THE VERY FIRST CENTURY! The printers are setting up a speedy CRASH PROGRAM, to give us first delivery of this book by October 1—in time for the Feast. Never in our time has any book or writing spoken as this new book will! Its title is THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL. It is the MESSAGE OF THE ENTIRE BIBLE—put together as never before—from the prehistoric existence of only God and "The Word," through the creation of angels, the creation of the endless PHYSICAL UNIVERSE and CREATION OF THIS EARTH—on through the sinning of the angels, the renewing of the face of the earth for MAN—the creation of MAN—WHY man was put here on earth—WHY God left Satan here up to now—WHY the Old Testament congregation of Israel—and why the Church and its mission—on through the world tomorrow for one thousand years—and then—THE INCREDIBLE POTENTIAL OF MAN THROUGHOUT ETERNITY—over all the vast material universe.

But for all of the real truth of God contained in this book, there is a serious problem with it also. It contains an *outright rejection* of God's revealed Truth concerning man's nature. Here is Mr. Armstrong's admission in the next paragraph of the *Co-Worker Letter* quoted above:

Much of this has never before appeared in print. Much of it will be NEW Bible truth to YOU! It explains the mind of man, and the actual source of human nature.

For over forty years, Mr. Armstrong taught us—as part of the revelation of Jesus Christ (and confirmed in the original *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*)—that God *intentionally* gave us a rebellious mind, with the obligation to *overcome* that carnal nature through the power of God's Holy Spirit (full details concerning this doctrinal teaching can be found in the October 13, 2003, Feast of Tabernacles sermon entitled, *What Makes a Child Tick?*). But beginning in 1976 with a new article entitled, *Human Nature—Did God Create It?*, the Worldwide Church of God totally rejected this foundational teaching and adopted a change to say that man is actually born *neutral* in nature—neither good nor bad—but then quickly absorbs Satan's influence thereafter, which is what "turns us" to become bad. Some might not think this is a major change, but it has everything to do with how we view our obligation to overcome, which is the very key to our salvation (Revelation 21:7). There is a major difference in the level of motivation to overcome, between the one who despises what he is by nature and seeks to root it out, vs. the other, who thinks he is not really bad by nature and puts the blame all on Satan. Is there any wonder why God's church began to de-emphasize the need for personal self-mastery in later years, focusing only on being loyal to the ministry and continuing to send tithes and offerings?

This doctrinal change was absolutely diabolical, as were the previous changes in Pentecost and divorce and remarriage in 1974. From the time the ministry began to repudiate the concept that God was the one who gave us truth by divine revelation through Mr. Armstrong—and adopted instead the idea that we must seek out the interpretation of deceived scholars of this world in order to discover "real truth"—God withdrew His Holy Spirit, and that body began a downhill descent over the next twenty years, which ultimately led to its total rejection of all foundational truth by 1994. Many who claim that those early doctrinal changes which Mr. Armstrong approved were legitimate, fail to recognize that there is no authority given by God to any man—even an apostle—to change what He has delivered to the Church by divine revelation. And anyone who claims Mr. Armstrong did not receive those original teachings by divine revelation is really saying that the Radio Church of God was never God's true church, because wherever you find the true Church of God, you find a body who received the miracle of revealed truth. If that is not what we had, it was never God's church. And if it *was* God's church—which we believe is true—then what God gave us by revelation through that apostle can never change later, even by that very man himself.

Given the mixture of truth and error contained in *The Incredible Human Potential*, we do not accept it as a work to be valued. Interestingly, the book released seven years later—before Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986—*Mystery of The Ages*, actually covers the beauty of God's master plan on earth without besmirching it with these overt doctrinal corruptions, even though the Worldwide Church of God still held to those errors internally. Is it possible that God intervened

to prevent them from including their doctrinal corruptions in this particular book, even though the body was already sick and spiritually dying from apostasy? There are many sincere members of the Body today who came originally to a knowledge of God's Truth by reading *Mystery of The Ages*. How can we therefore deny its potential import as a tool of God?

For all of these reasons, perhaps it is now more evident why we usually resist using the phrase "human potential." It is not because there is anything technically wrong with the term, in and of itself. But its rise to prominence within God's church occurred at the very time when revealed truth was being rejected prophetically in favor of doctrinal error, and at a time when Satan successfully induced that church (spiritual Israel) to begin committing idolatry by seeking approval and acceptability from this world, just like her ancient forerunner (ancient Israel) had done time and time again, to her own destruction.

If we can recognize the mistakes which were made in the past—both from the Biblical accounts of the history of ancient Israel as well as the documented history of God's church in our very own time—we are in a very strong position to avoid repeating those same mistakes in the future. Never forget that our own natural minds are not trustworthy. And we have a powerful enemy who continues to look for ways to distract us from doing the real work of God.

There is no reason that any of us should fail. How blessed we are that God has preserved these histories for our admonition, and that by wisdom we might avoid the traps which threaten to prevent us from achieving our ultimate goal—that birth into the very Family of God through the grace of our High Priest and Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.

Yours with devotion in our soon-coming Savior,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Jon W. Brisby