

May 2016

Dear Brethren:

In this *Monthly Letter*, God has put into my heart to write about how the early church kept the doctrine. In Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." So, we are going to see who or which group now is the true church of God. We know God used Mr. H. W. Armstrong, and that is well-known by all the groups that came out of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG). Also, many believe that he was a last-day apostle, and they claim to follow his footsteps by following one of those men.

Apostles have laid the foundation from the beginning, and those who are called are being built upon that same foundation, Christ being the chief cornerstone. The Bible says that they continued steadfastly in the doctrine. There was no wavering or diverting from the doctrine that the apostle had laid down: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). The original foundation is Christ.

Now we are going to examine the doctrine that God gave Mr. Armstrong when he was called by God. Among all of the five-hundred-plus groups extant today, which groups still follow the original doctrine that came through Mr. Armstrong? Many have changed, twisted and removed the major ones.

How can they claim to follow Mr. Armstrong as God's apostle when they have done away with the doctrine he laid down in the church? Mr. Armstrong used to say, just as the Apostle Paul did, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11–12).

The early apostles received the doctrine from Jesus Christ, as Christ received it from His Father. The law and the prophets were taught until John. Since that time the Kingdom of God has been preached.

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery (Luke 16:17–18).

As for the doctrine of divorce and remarriage, many of these groups allow it, but the Apostle Paul and Mr. Armstrong both taught that, "A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 7:39–40). They have twisted and changed it. Mr. Raymond Cole stood firm to defend this doctrine more than anybody.

Here in Kenya there are some ministers and deacons, let alone church members, who have divorced many times and "remarried" many times. Some live with divorced women and their church headquarters allows it because that is how they are; they are for numbers. They have fulfilled what the Apostle Paul said to Timothy:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:1–2).

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (2 Timothy 4:3–5).

They do not follow what they claim; only on the surface do they appear to follow.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:15–18).

They do not know what they learned from the apostle they claim to follow. If truly they are following him, why do their groups continue to divide year after year? Which ones of them can stand and prove that they are following the teaching that God gave the apostle? I know only one that keeps a Monday Pentecost, the land Sabbath and does not permit divorce and remarriage as Mr. Armstrong originally taught. Since Pentecost was changed in 1974 from Monday to Sunday, the WCG has been keeping it the same as the ROMAN CATHOLICS.

Worldwide Church Date: Roman Catholic Date:

1975:	May 18	May 18
1976:	June 6	June 6
1979:	June 3	June 3
1980:	May 25	May 25
1981:	June 7	June 7
1982:	May 30	May 30
1983:	May 22	May 22
1984:	June 10	June 10

That is how it is even until now. The splinter groups who decided to go along with the doctrinal changes still keep the Roman day of Flora. Are they continuing in the apostle's doctrine?

The Apostle Paul told Timothy:

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy [Spirit] which dwelleth in us (2 Timothy 1:13–14).

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them (2 Timothy 3:14).

The doctrine is revealed by the Holy Spirit of God:

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:5).

Before 1974, God gave the apostle what was good for the church. He revealed to him the Truth, and the work of the church was to abide and keep it as it was given.

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father (1 John 2:24).

The message to Pergamos was:

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate (Revelation 2:14–15).

Some were following another doctrine that was Balaam's and the Nicolaitans', and this is what most splinter groups are following. The Apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him (2 Corinthians 11:4–5).

We see here that the splinter groups received another spirit and this spirit made them change doctrine and causes them to split continuously.

Any time a group or minister deviates from the original truth, he will fall into this category:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).

Jesus told the Philadelphia church: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). If they do not hold on to the doctrine that the apostle laid down in the church, they are as Paul says in the book of 2 Timothy:

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:5–7).

These five-hundred-plus groups each claim to be the true church of God, yet all of them speak and teach different things. The church cannot be split five-hundred-plus ways and all claim to be the true church. They are the ones described in 2 Peter 3:3. Among all these, there must be one Church that does the will of the Father. If we can believe that

during the time of the prophets and apostles there were false prophets and false apostles, then the same is true in our day:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Peter 2:1–3).

Many think nothing of making slight changes to doctrine, but the Apostle Paul warned the church in Corinth:

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:6–7).

Christ also said in Matthew 16:12 that the leaven represents doctrine: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." There never has been, and never will be, a time that God will confuse His church by giving it two sets of doctrine. The Bible says that God is not a God of confusion: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

In today's society, and in the churches, there is a definite and recognized spirit that goes well beyond mere democracy. It is the spirit of "post-modernism." They are modernizing even the truth to suit their needs. Democracy is in the churches and that is why there are new splits every year in those groups.

This is what I have found: The leaders and people within any particular church organization are not against all that was revealed by the apostle, but they feel they have to change the major doctrines to ease the burden and hold on to those members who favor the changes. They all accept change, but they disagree with each other as to which ones they believe should be changed.

They do not see that they are off the track. They think God is happy with what they are doing, but they are not continuing steadfastly in the doctrine (Amos 3:7). God does not change, neither does His doctrine. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of

Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6). The problem with many is that they do not incline their ears to what was (is) being taught to the Church.

And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear (Jeremiah 25:4).

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Will He find faith on the earth—those who continued in the doctrine? Which groups will He find keeping and continuing steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, even though the doctrine is being changed year in and year out?

Ministers are told to take care of the flock. Do they? Or do they just kill them spiritually? They were to continue in the doctrine:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:28–29).

The Apostle Paul said he knew that among ministers there were going to arise those perverters of the Truth and that they would draw members to themselves. This is how it is today; they draw large numbers of members and they boast about how big the group is.

Mr. Armstrong, in a warning to the church on June 24, 1978, said:

We don't realize, my brethren, the way we've been drifting. We have been doing just what you heard in the sermonette—doing our own thing. We have been getting lukewarm. . . . I would rather have two or three filled with the Spirit of the Living God than to have this Church packed full (and a thousand other Churches like it) of lukewarm people getting into the Laodicean condition, doing their own thing.

Brethren, do you see what I see in the world of splinter groups? Where are those who sigh and cry?

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof (Ezekiel 9:4–6).

It is now up to you and me to hold on to what we were taught and to continue in the doctrine that the apostle taught the church so that no one take our crown. God's doctrine stands firm.

For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations (Psalm 100:5).

For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD (Psalm 117:2).

Jesus said that all that He was teaching was not His own:

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things (John 8:28).

He was taught by His Father what to teach:

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak (John 12:49–50).

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He told Moses to teach them to the Israelites. He was to teach them as they were, not to take away from or add to them. What the apostles received from the Lord is what they delivered to the members (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Many of the splinter groups think that they are continuing in the apostle's doctrine, yet they are corrupting and thwarting it.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring

forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:15–23).

Most of them have pushed the Bible and the Holy Spirit of God aside. They not only neglect the doctrine, but with great intellectual pride in the name of "modern scholarship" they resort to every conceivable means to undermine that doctrine and to toss it aside as a wretched work of "an uneducated man's thought." They did not believe God revealed Truth through Herbert Armstrong. The Apostle Paul told Timothy what was going to happen in the last days (latter time). All these groups claim they were taught by Mr. Armstrong, but why are they not together, teaching the same doctrine and believing the same things? Which among them continues steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine by teaching the sanctity of marriage, Monday Pentecost, and healing that comes from God, if not Church of God, The Eternal?

On the one hand, the church at Ephesus was commended by Christ because they would not tolerate certain error or evil, but rather they examined the false apostles and exposed them.

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted (Revelation 2:2–3).

On the other hand, the church at Ephesus was criticized for departing from the original faith, and subjected to losing their salvation if they did not repent (vv. 4–5).

Then Christ commended them again for detecting and rejecting the corrupt works of the Nicolaitans: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (vs. 6).

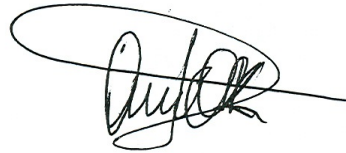
So they have a lot going for them, but they are still guilty of doctrinal perversion. This is what the splinter groups today are like.

Many people who were in the church did not realize early on how many heresies came into the church unless they were in some position of pastoring, preaching or answering letters. Most members did not know of pet doctrines which were being brought in by the so-called experts, who by their own research, only offered ideas that did not edify the church. We have all met people who bring their pet ideas. Something inside them drives them to think that they must share their teaching with everyone they meet. They try all they can to make sure that we come to the "glory" of the new truth they have discovered and believe, and they look for followers to spread their teachings. After finding sympathetic ears, the heresy begins to grow until it is hard to tolerate. In the minds of the people who now want to teach things the church did not teach, they usually feel they have made a great discovery and God has ordained it. But the Apostle Paul warned the church in Galatia:

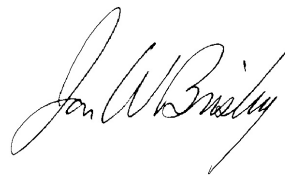
As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:9).

If there were a slogan written on their backs, it would say: I AM ALSO LOST, DON'T FOLLOW ME.

God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Isaya Owak

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Jon W. Brisby