

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91123

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
President and Pastor

April 1, 1984

Dear Brethren in Christ:

This is a special personal letter to you members of God's Church, written in between monthly Co-Worker letters.

I recently visited my brother, Dwight, who composed all of the music in our Church hymnals except for three or four songs we felt worthy of being included. He has devoted the last 35 years of his life to composing the music of these hymns for us. For years, even before that, I had felt we needed our own hymn book, with words from the Psalms (the word Psalms means songs) and other scriptures from the Bible.

I had noticed that in the hymn books sung in Protestant churches, the words are not scriptural, and sing the praises of the congregations of people instead of the praises of God.

Wherever I travel over the whole earth, visiting our churches on all continents, I find you brethren all enjoying the same hymns and the same music with great joy and gladness.

Perhaps most of you have not even realized it was my own brother, 12 years younger than I, who produced the beautiful music we have all come to love and joy in. On this recent visit to speak to the churches in the area of Vancouver, Canada, I stopped off to spend a few minutes with my brother. It was probably our last meeting together in this life.

I found him in the last stages of cancer in the bone structure, going through the marrow of the bones. He is a little discouraged, not realizing what a real success his life has been, and with the mortgage on his home still not paid off as he faces the end of this life. He is not expected to live much longer.

He has not had the opportunity to see and hear you brethren in congregations all over the world singing with such joy the music he composed for you, and I'm sure he can have no realization of how greatly he has contributed to God's Church and consequently what a successful life he has lived. He will be 80, if he survives until September 15. He has continued up to the present to compose more and more new hymns, most of which have not been as yet published. These may come out in a new hymnal book, much enlarged over our present book.

We have had no experience or precedent to know how one with such musical talent should be compensated for his years of faithful labor, but because of IRS restrictions over us by the government, and the fact he is my brother, I feel he has never been properly rewarded for his efforts. However, if some of you brethren do feel you would like him to know how much his beautiful music has meant to your Christian life, and would care to just write him a few words of appreciation, I know that would brighten the few remaining days he probably has in this life.

Write to his local pastor, Richard Parker, 5540 34th St., Loop NE, Tacoma, WA 98422.

I am writing you after a week of crisis, with my life hanging in the balance. I had to call two of our ministers at 2:30 in the morning, to anoint me, and also the doctor who regularly checks up on my heart condition since my total heart failure in August of 1977. I was put on oxygen for the next few days. The doctor has said since that he was frankly scared that I would not survive this recent crisis, but God heard our prayers, and I have come through and once again am back at work in my office.

This morning one of our regional directors from overseas and another leading overseas minister dropped into my home to view the weekly telecast with me.

During our conversation afterward a matter came up about one or two former brethren whom they had had to disfellowship. I was naturally very much interested in knowing the details. If there is anything we dislike to do it is to have to disfellowship anyone from God's Church. In each of these cases the one disfellowshipped had disagreed with the

government of the Church -- they had taken an offensive and hostile attitude toward the minister who was over them in their local church. The question then came up between us: Just how would we know if one has been really converted?

I said, let's go back once again to the beginning -- the incident of the forbidden fruit at the time of Adam and Eve. If Adam had taken of the Tree of Life he would have received, along with his own human spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. To understand conversion we need to understand how man was created. He was created out of matter just like the animals. He has a brain like animals with a difference that God put a human spirit within the man that impowers the human brain with mind power. It gives him power to acquire knowledge that a simple animal brain cannot acquire. It gives him power to have attitudes of both good and evil. Now remember the first man was created with that power. Had he taken of the Tree of Life, the Spirit of God would have been added to his human spirit, and would have given him spiritual knowledge not available through his single human spirit. Moreover, it would have given him spiritual knowledge that the human mind through the human spirit cannot acquire. It would have given him the very love of God -- a love that transcends all love made possible through the mere human spirit.

Adam chose to take to himself the knowledge of good and evil. That limited him to the power of good on the human level, which is always self-centered -- selfish. With this single human spirit humanity has been limited to selfish love and too often an attitude of competition and hostility toward others. He resents authority over him.

On Adam's making that decision God closed up the Tree of Life (the gift of his Holy Spirit) until after the coming of Christ, the second Adam. The only exception to this was the prophets and the few righteous mentioned in the Old Testament -- Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the prophets for the writing of the scriptures.

After Jesus paid the penalty of human sin in our stead, God opened his Holy Spirit, but only to those drawn by God to repentance, which means an altogether changed life, and to believing Christ -- believing what Christ said.

This repentance and believing in Christ means turning completely away from an attitude of rebellion against authority, an attitude of vanity, coveting, competition and hostility. That is what Jesus meant when he said we must become like a little child to inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit means many things but primary among them is a spirit of surrender toward God and God's authority, a complete departure from a spirit of controversy and anger -- a complete surrender to the will of God.

When we find that hostile attitude of disagreement, disrespect for authority, lack of kindness and patience we may consider that as the evidence of a carnal mind. It is still hostile against God (Rom. 8:7), in the form of hostility against those whom God has put over them in authority.

The Church is merely the embryo that will develop into the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God there will not be found a single particle of contention, controversy, opposition, hostility and impatient anger. Therefore, we cannot tolerate any such attitude in the Church. The apostle Paul instructs that in the Church we must be of one accord all speaking the same thing (I Cor. 1:10). We are to mark those who, in hostile attitude, cause division and controversy among brethren and avoid them.

If the entire Church had followed these commandments from God's Word we would not have had the troubles in the Church in 1974 and the later 1970s.

Let us remember that Christ said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

God's Church must follow these biblical instructions, and we shall have peace with happiness and joy throughout the whole Church from now on, and forever in the Kingdom of God.

I feel that the above is especially appropriate for us all to consider in preparation for the Passover now coming in just a few days.

And finally, I must tell you, brethren, that the cash flow balances for God's Work are lower than they should be at this time of the year. Prior to 1979 we customarily borrowed a million dollars or more in January to be paid back from the Spring Holy Day offerings. We have not had to borrow money for the operation of the Work from our bankers since 1979. What a blessing that has been from God! We should all thank and praise God for it. But this year we need to replenish our cash

reserves by the Spring Holy Day offerings just as though we had borrowed large sums from the bank. I have to ask you, in Jesus' name, even at point of financial sacrifice to yourself, to make a special larger than ordinary offering on the Holy Day following the Passover. I know that you will take this seriously and prayerfully.

With deep love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong