

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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PRESIDENT and PASTOR

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Dear Brethren and Co-HEIRS with Christ:

I wish I didn't have to write you this letter. I write it with a heavy heart. God is showing me that many of YOU right now are standing in MORTAL DANGER. I don't mean all -- and this may not apply to many who will receive this letter -- but it is true of TOO MANY of our members!

And I mean in serious DANGER of losing out, and never entering the glorious Kingdom of God! In danger of being consigned, instead, to a yawning LAKE OF FIRE!

If you are really established in the KNOWLEDGE of the Truth Satan cannot deceive you with false doctrines. Knowing this, many of you relax, apparently assuming you've "got it made." Apparently many are carelessly supposing they are now SURE of being protected through the Great Tribulation (now ALMOST READY TO STRIKE!). Whether it will be Petra or another place, many feel carelessly secure, and, after that, entering God's Kingdom with ETERNAL LIFE!

But YOU DON'T HAVE IT "MADE." You are still being TRIED -- to determine whether you shall have this protection -- whether you shall enter the Kingdom of God! It is those who are LED BY the Spirit of God -- NOT those who are led by desire for more and more physical and material things! When you were brought by the power of God's Holy Spirit to REPENT, and to BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and to receive His blessed Holy Spirit -- that is when JUDGMENT BEGAN for YOU!

The unconverted world is not being called now. God's judgment is not, yet, on them! But the time has come when judgment must begin at the House of God! (I Peter 4:17.) That means those in The CHURCH OF GOD! So you and I are being JUDGED by the all-seeing ever-living GOD, every hour of every day!

But Brethren, many of you are letting down spiritually! Many of you are letting material things, possessions, pleasures, fill your minds. Many are letting down on constant earnest PRAYER, slacking off on continuous Bible study, letting your affections be centered on things of this world, and on anticipation of some new things you think will fill you with delight.

If you are established in the knowledge of God's Truth so that Satan can't deceive you with counterfeit doctrines, Satan isn't giving up. He is out to outsmart you. He is out to TEMPT you with the glitter and glamour and anticipation of MATERIAL things of his world. He is out to tempt you to begin finding fault: or gossiping; or criticizing. He will try to tempt you to become envious, or jealous, or resentful -- and finally, get you "hooked" with bitterness!

I know that some of you, feeling we may have now less than 3 1/2 years to go, in getting out GOD'S WORK, begin to want to cram in all of THIS WORLD'S interests, possessions, interests or delights you possibly can, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! You are Getting YOUR EYES OFF OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD! All of a sudden, that seems far away, unattractive -- but that new color TV set, or the new car, or the new clothes, or some other interest, seems MORE REAL. Seems more close at hand -- yet seems slipping away from you to enjoy forever, if you don't hurry and enjoy those physical things quickly!

One member and wife who were being ensnared in exactly this way, into greedily possessing desired material things to enjoy before it was too late -- obtaining what they could not afford -- have found that disaster suddenly struck! Now they are losing all those things and what they had previously beside! Now they are bitterly repentant -- at least I hope they are!

Satan's temptations and material deceptions are attractive -- alluring! They appeal to the eye -- or other physical senses! He dangles before your eyes every kind of gadget, vanity- stimulating trinket, luxury item, sensuous entertainment and activity. He tempts you with TV commercials, with beautiful ads, store windows. Satan makes it easY to GET, through installment-plan buying, buy-now-pay-later schemes, credit-expanding loans. Not all, but too many of our members!

So WHAT IS HAPPENING? Great numbers of our members seem to be falling in WHOLESALE with these temptations. Many of you have gotten up to your necks in debt. Many of you have no savings, no reserve, no ability to withstand any financial reverse or crisis.

SO, hundreds of you are SLACKING OFF in your RESPONSIBILITIES in GOD'S WORK!

Once again, the property fund is RUNNING BEHIND LAST YEAR, when it ought to be running 30% ahead of last year! Many of you are slacking off in paying tithes and in free-will offerings! Many, facing your third-tithe year, decide it's "impossible" -- can't see how you can possibly do it -- when through the years we have been getting many letters from those who DID IT, even though they couldn't see how they could make it, saying that, SURPRISINGLY, they came through that third-tithe year better financially than in the preceding years! You see, God PROMISES to help and prosper the honest and faithful tither! CAN YOU RELY ON HIS PROMISE?

Brethren! WE MUST WAKE UP!! We must COME TO OUR SENSES!

Here we are at the very CLIMAX of the 6,000 years God has allotted for humanity to go its own way! We're at the time JUST BEFORE Christ is to come in all supernatural POWER and GLORY to SMASH this world's evils, and its governments, and to BRING US the REAL RICHES! All the REALLY good things lie just ahead -- AFTER CHRIST COMES!

And this living Christ has called YOU as well as me, to thunder THIS MIGHTY WITNESS to the world -- preparing the way for His coming -- preparing the way for the TRULY GOOD THINGS! And some of you are letting down, and going a whoring after the FALSE VALUES, neglecting YOUR FULL PART in the only Work that counts right now!

Right now, GOD'S WORK is leaping ahead as never before! We have taken a far bigger increase in the POWER of the WORLDWIDE IMPACT in the past six weeks than in any previous six YEARS! This brochure shows you what stupendous NEW DOORS God is now opening before us! All of a sudden, we are adding ONE HUNDRED MILLION people, before whose eyes we are placing these forceful ads!

Yet we stand in MORTAL DANGER of having to STOP this campaign! Now is the time when we are entering the FINAL PUSH of this entire Work. We are on what I have described as the "GUN LAP." We are coming in, as the saying goes, "on the home stretch." THIS is the time we must SACRIFICE other things, and put our WHOLE HEARTS AND SOULS INTO THIS GREAT WORK!

May I mention something personal? Yesterday, at the Sabbath service of God's Headquarters church, I mentioned that now, in my 77th year, I can look back with real satisfaction and deep gratitude on a life of accomplishment and success which God has granted -- resulting in many, many thousands of CHANGED LIVES -- many thousands begotten as children of God, HEIRS of HIS KINGDOM! Many hundreds who have come to the three campuses of Ambassador College -- young people of 17 to 22 years of age, mostly. And GREAT CHANGES have taken place in their lives. Fine, upright, godly CHARACTER has been developed. I have seen these fine young people blossom out into the very finest kind of men and women -- and nearly all of them now devoted full time to GOD'S WORK!

Two paragraphs back I broke off writing to go for a bite of lunch with one of the men on our staff. He mentioned how it encouraged and inspired him to hear me say that yesterday. So I thought on it and commented further about it. It is NOT a great success that I, by my personal power and efforts, have achieved. It is a success that GOD HAS GIVEN. Yet I have been an instrument in God's hand. I know that I do not possess the ability to have built so great a Work of myself. Two things, at least, God looked for that were basic and vital. First of all, God looks on the HEART -- that is, the spirit -- the attitude. He, Himself, brought me to complete SURRENDER to Him and His Word. For 28 years He kept me in virtual abject poverty, after I had been quite successful as a young advertising man -- in order to root out as much as possible of the vanity and conceit, and bring a humility that develops the CONFIDENCE which is FAITH in GOD replacing SELF-confidence.

I know that the HEART was right -- the hostility was gone -- the INTENTION was to do God's will as He revealed it. Then, second, He required absolute LOYALTY to Him and His Word. Once He revealed His truth, He required that I keep it inviolate, never compromising with it in slightest degree. And, as I then commented, I do not know of any other man who even professes to be a minister of Jesus Christ who has remained uncompromisingly honest with God's Word through severe persecution, through test, opposition, temptation, and in hardship requiring real living faith.

There are, today, many honest and true ministers associated with me in God's Church who are completely loyal and uncompromising with God's Truth. But God called and chose me to be the pioneer among His ministers in this "Philadelphia era" of His Church. And as such, I was put to tests such as these other fine and dedicated men have not been called on to suffer.

First, just before God started opening the mighty doors of radio and the printing press, I was being paid a very small salary by the Oregon Conference of what we recognize now as the "Sardis era" of God's Church. Two ministers persuaded the officials of that small Conference to demand that I preach and act on a certain point contrary to the teaching and example of God's Word. I saw then that if men paid my salary I would have to serve MEN, not God. And if I worked for GOD, I would have to look to Him for financial support. I relied on God's promise in Philippians 4:19 -- that He would supply ALL MY NEED. It was not all my WANTS -- but He did supply all my NEED. I had no car. I wore out shoe leather walking over rocky gravel roads to preach to small groups.

Then God let a temptation come. A man claiming to represent many business men in Eugene, Oregon, wanted to team me with a well-known evangelist. There was promise of big financial backing. But I would have to preach nothing about God's Law. I would have to preach what MEN dictated. I would be muzzled -- as most ministers are! I showed him out the door.

I still tried to cooperate with Sardis ministers, though relying solely on God for financial support. I had to suffer every humiliation. I was better educated than they. God blessed my preaching with rich results wherever I preached -- no one ever saw any visible results from the preaching of all the others combined. Yet they humiliated me every way they could, with the attitude that I was the "least of the ministers." I suffered their insults in front of brethren. Yet the brethren loved me, as long as I was with them, more than they. They fought against me behind my back. They schemed and strove every way to break up and stop the radio broadcast.

After the radio work was beginning to grow -- we were on the air in Eugene and in Portland, Oregon -- two members, prosperous truck gardeners, attempted to force me to go their way instead of God's in a certain matter. When I refused, they said, "We'll FORCE you to it. We'll whip you into line. Our tithes and offerings are half of the entire financial support that keeps your radio work going. We'll withdraw our tithe."

They did. I trusted GOD, not their tithes and offerings. And God made up, somehow -- without any efforts on my part -- for what they withdrew. That year, as in other years, THE WORK OF GOD grew 30% -- and its income increased by the usual 30%.

A couple of years later we were on the air in Eugene, Portland, Seattle, and just beginning in Los Angeles. A church had been raised up in Everett, Washington. Its members were more prosperous, financially, than others. An ex-Adventist minister had wormed his way in. I had invited him to cooperate with us in the beginning. He had seemed sincere. He managed to get to Everett as pastor of that little church. Then he changed from the BIBLE doctrines to some of his own. He taught that tithing was done away. That church was then contributing HALF of the entire income for the Work. Later this man claimed to find a scripture that he said made tithing obligatory after all -- but it had to be paid to him -- not to God's Work.

About that time a certain advertising agent in Los Angeles asked me to have lunch with him. I believe it was at the Jonathan Club. He was the advertising agent for a religious broadcast that was then spending two million dollars a year buying radio time. This agent urged me to give up the ministry.

"Listen, Mr. Armstrong," he said. "All you'll have ahead in your religious ministry is problems, troubles, and headaches. I know. That's all Dr. Blank (not his real name) has. He is terribly harassed getting in that \$2 million a year to pay radio bills. He gets practically nothing out of it but headaches. I'm the one who gets the money out of it. As his Agency, the radio stations pay me 15% of that \$2 million a year -- I make \$300,000 a year. You have ability as a news analyst. With World War II going full blast right now, I can get you a sponsor for a 15-minute news analysis 5 days a week -- Mondays through Fridays -- at a fee of at least \$100,000 a year to start. I think in a year I can have you making \$200,000 a year -- and NO HEADACHES! You can even bring in a small amount of Biblical prophecy once in a while -- though of course not like you do now -- for it must not sound religious, of course."

Was I tempted? Not at all, though I think Satan thought I would be.

That "temptation" came at a time when the income for the Work had been cut in HALF! The income for the whole Work was probably about \$35,000 a year by then. And Satan tried to tempt me with an offer between \$100,000 and \$200,000!

And ALL FOR MYSELF! Most of that \$35,000 had to go for radio bills -- and I was beginning to have a small number of secretaries on the payroll.

In all this, Mrs. Armstrong was my faithful partner and helper. She even "scolded" me (she wasn't really serious) for telling her of that offer. SO -- we continued that year, as before, RELYING ON GOD -- and that year, despite HALF our income being withdrawn, the income for God's Work increased 30% as usual!

Mrs. Armstrong suffered through 28 long years of poverty with me, getting God's Work going -- and GROWING! We learned what REAL joyous HAPPINESS is, in poverty. We had God's Holy Spirit to lead us. We were constantly learning NEW TRUTHS in God's Word -- a FAR GREATER THRILL AND JOY THAN MATERIAL THINGS!

Today Ambassador College has trained many fine men for this ministry with me. Not one is a "yes-man." But once you KNOW God's Truth, Satan can no more deceive you with false doctrines. These men KNOW they have God's Truth. They are loyal to it. I believe they would endure hardship, poverty, opposition, temptation, persecution, for it -- and remain loyal, as I have. BUT THE POINT IS, God has not required this of them. However, a few of those who came in during the first three or four years of the college DID undergo hardship, and even hunger at times, in order to remain faithful to this WORK -- though they never let me know it at the time.

But in all honesty, I know of NO OTHER professed ministers of the Gospel who have remained faithful to God's Word in this way.

Brethren, Mrs. Armstrong struggled with me, at sacrifice greater than you can know, for a WHOLE GENERATION, that YOU might have the JOY to have part in this glorious WORK OF GOD, now. I no longer have my dear wife at my side. I have to carry on without her.

But WE, Brethren, are the BODY OF CHRIST -- the collective human Body in whom GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT carries on GOD'S WORK. The Great God has called US as HIS CHURCH to fulfil this GREATEST COMMISSION OF ALL HISTORY. It is the greatest, the most IMPORTANT job ever assigned to any group in the history of man on earth! It is the most vital, critical Message this world EVER NEEDED TO HEAR!

God has called us -- HIS CHURCH -- to be FAITHFUL under this great RESPONSIBILITY! He BOUGHT and PAID for us with the priceless life and blood of His Son Jesus! He has GIVEN us His HOLY SPIRIT! He illuminates our minds with priceless knowledge! He has given us His Spirit to convict us of our NEGLIGENCE -- of THE IMPORTANCE of His Commission!

Now I know well that SOME of you are NOT guilty of this negligence. SOME do not have the financial ability. Some are women with husbands not in the Church, and unable to help. I REALIZE THAT. But I realize, too, that there are MANY who DO have the ability, and who are GUILTY BEFORE GOD of shirking -- of letting the SATANIC attitude of GET fill their minds, and cause them to NEGLECT prayer and Bible study.

People who set their affections on these things here below are HAVING their reward now. The only reward, later, will be DEATH in the LAKE OF FIRE! I want you to think SERIOUSLY on this, Brethren! If you fulfill the LUST OF THE FLESH the love of CHRIST is not in you!

Are some of you going to find yourselves in the Laodicean church? Is the living Christ going to have to SPEW YOU OUT OF HIS MOUTH?

Let's PUT OUR SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL -- let's make whatever sacrifice is necessary -- let's bring those special BUILDING FUND offerings back up -- let's PRAY AS NEVER BEFORE FOR THE WORK -- because THE WORK is SUFFERING because of your neglect, right when it needs to LEAP AHEAD bigger and bigger!

We've got to get our eyes on THE GOAL -- the KINGDOM OF GOD! We've got to do some REPENTING -- we've got to get STIRRED UP -- electrified -- by the magnitude of our responsibilities -- and the PRIVILEGE God has granted in being in HIS CHURCH, having PART in changing the world -- and finally SAVING THE WORLD!

That's all I can say, Brethren. I will PRAY EARNESTLY for YOU -- will YOU for ME, and THE WORK?

With love, in Jesus' name, Herbert W. Armstrong