

THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT CHURCH GOVERNMENT!



TRIUMPH PROPHETIC MINISTRIES (CHURCH OF GOD) * ALTADENA * CALIFORNIA *



Do you know that the form of government practiced by the Worldwide Church of God and other breakaway groups was CONDEMNED by Jesus Christ AND Herbert W. Armstrong himself? Contrary to popular belief, the BIBLE and secular history show that the office of apostle DIED OUT with the original apostles -- and does not exist today! Why has the office of PROPHET been ignored; and what is the HIERARCHICAL type of government practiced today by most of these groups? Contrast this with the TRUE church offices outlined in the fourth chapter of Ephesians!

John D. Keyser

During the almost 2,000 years since the New Testament Church was founded (on the day of Pentecost in 30 A.D.), a tremendous amount of confusion has reigned (and outright fraud taken place), over the CORRECT FORM of Church government. In the late 1930s and early 1940s the Worldwide Church of God had a correct understanding of this vital issue; but by the time Mr. Armstrong died in 1986 the Church's understanding had revolved a complete 180 degrees from its former perception.

In the world today I do not know of any church that fully governs itself according to the directions revealed in the New Testament. The time, therefore, has come to set the record straight and reveal the PLAIN

TRUTH about Church government!

According to Herbert W. Armstrong, in his book entitled *Mystery of the Ages*:

The Roman Catholic Church is organized on the hierarchical system with the pope in supreme authority, a college of cardinals next in authority, a curia at headquarters in the Vatican with archbishops, bishops and priests.

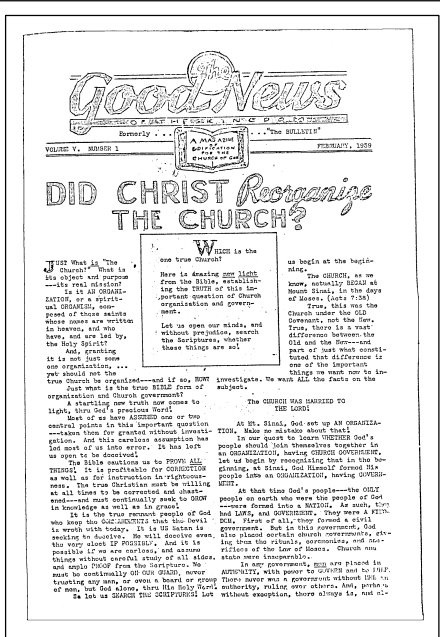
The Presbyterian Church is organized with the presbyters or ministers in control. The Congregational Church delegates top authority to the congregation -- "government by the consent of the governed."

And so it goes. THE CHURCHES OF THIS WORLD OF SATAN ARE ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO HUMANLY DEVISED PATTERNS. (Emphasis mine).

Mr. Armstrong goes on to say: "But the Bible gives explicit directions in regard to Church government. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. God's form of government is, indeed, HIERARCHICAL. (Emphasis mine). God the Father is head over Christ -- the sole Lawgiver and supreme authority." (Dodd, Mead and Company, New York. Page 242).

Now wait just a minute!

Mr. Armstrong has just finished saying that the HIERARCHICAL form of government used by the Roman Catholic Church is "of Satan" and "organized according to humanly devised patterns." Then, in the next breath, he claims "God's form of government [in the Church] is,



Herbert Armstrong's 1939 Article

We have a problem here -- God DID NOT set up a hierarchical form of government at Mt. Sinai!

indeed, hierarchical." It would seem to me that Mr. Armstrong is admitting right here that the form of government practiced by the Worldwide Church of God (and other breakaway groups) is SATANIC AND PATTERNED AFTER HUMANLY DEvised ORGAN- IZATIONS!

Granted the Bible DOES give explicit directions in regard to Church government; and granted Christ is the head of the Church. But is God's form of government within the Church HIERARCHICAL? Let us pause for a moment and DEFINE this form of government.

The Hierarchical Form of Government

Under the entry "hierarchy" we find, in The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the following definition: "1) a ruling body of clergy organized into ranks; 2) persons or things arranged in a graded series." Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines it in this way: "Hierarchy: A body of rulers, esp. of ecclesiastics, disposed organically in ranks and orders each subordinate to the one above it."

Now that we understand the hierarchical form of government is basically government from the top down -- with everybody divided into ranks and orders -- let us ask the question again: Is God's form of government, in His Church, indeed hierarchical?

Mr. Armstrong himself answers this question in an

article he wrote for the February, 1939 issue of The Good News Magazine: "All authority and power to rule is limited SOLELY to each LOCAL congregation. But there is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for any super-government, or organization with authority over the local congregations!...Jesus never set up an organization, nor did He establish any Church GOVERNMENT."

On page 246 of Mystery of the Ages, Mr. Armstrong makes this statement: "Old Testament Israel, the Church of the Old Testament, was also a nation in the world -- though not of the world as God organized it. Its GOVERNMENT was HIERARCHICAL. It was theocratic government -- government from the top down -- the very opposite of "democracy."

We have a problem here -- God DID NOT set up a hierarchical form of government at Mt. Sinai! The government set up was very similar to that of the New Testament form, with ELDERS in each town and judges guiding the nation. In fact, contrary to what Mr. Armstrong says, it was really a "loose" type of democracy!

The HIERARCHICAL form of government didn't come into existence UNTIL the people rebelled against God's system and asked for their own king -- Saul. God complied with this request, issuing a STRONG WARNING about what would happen if they continued with this HIERARCHICAL type of

government. You can read about this in *I Samuel 8*.

Mr. Armstrong goes on to say: "The CHURCH is organized under theocratic government, hierarchical in form." Can this be true?

Let Mr. Armstrong answer himself again: "The New Testament Church is not a kingdom -- not a church government but an assembly of individuals CALLED OUT -- Spirit-filled individuals, and therefore a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not an organization." ("Did Christ Reorganize the Church," by Herbert W. Armstrong, February, 1939 issue of the *Good News*).

We must remember that although the hierarchical form of government WAS USED in ancient Israel (after the people rebelled and DEMANDED THEIR OWN KING), to bring order to an UNCONVERTED AND REBELLIOUS NATION, this type of government was CLEARLY condemned by Jesus as an UNACCEPTABLE method of organizing His Church. The reason being that it puts a man IN PLACE OF GOD, and causes men to look at the human head instead of to God. Peter insisted, in *Acts 5:29*, that a Christian "ought to obey God rather than men." But carnal men tend to grant loyalty to the HUMAN HEAD and follow his teachings even when those teachings contradict God's Word.

Mr. Armstrong FULLY realized this back in 1939 when he wrote:

How, then, did ORGANIZATION, and the idea of CHURCH GOVERNMENT get into the Church? It came out of Babylon! Spiritual Babylon -- that is, ROME!...Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government...are IN BABYLON, and actually worshipers of THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST! And God is calling us, HIS people OUT OF BABYLON today, before it is too late -- before the PLAGUES fall!...Our

Christ NEVER intended for the hierarchical form of government to be used in His Church! He did NOT create a body with TWO HEADS!

heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men in AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church...What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION -- which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power...God's Word commands us to COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be separate. God's last warning is, "COME OUT OF BABYLON!!" -- *Did Christ Reorganize the Church*.

The Two-Headed Body!

God's instruction book for mankind -- the *Bible* -- likens God's Church to the human body: "And God placed all things under his [Christ's] feet and appointed him to be HEAD over everything for the church, which is his BODY, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (*Ephesians 1:22*).

Also, in *Ephesians 4:15*: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into HIM WHO IS THE HEAD, that is, Christ. From him the WHOLE BODY, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as EACH PART does its work."

We can see from this that Christ is the HEAD of the body or Church; and "we who are many form one body, and EACH MEMBER BELONGS TO ALL THE OTHERS" (*Romans 12:5*). Now, if God had chosen a HUMAN LEADER, under Christ, to lead his New Testament Church, we

would be faced with an ANOMALY! Have you ever seen a body with TWO HEADS? Christ plainly says in *Mark 10:42*: "Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles LORD IT OVER THEM, and their high officials EXERCISE AUTHORITY over them. NOT SO WITH YOU."

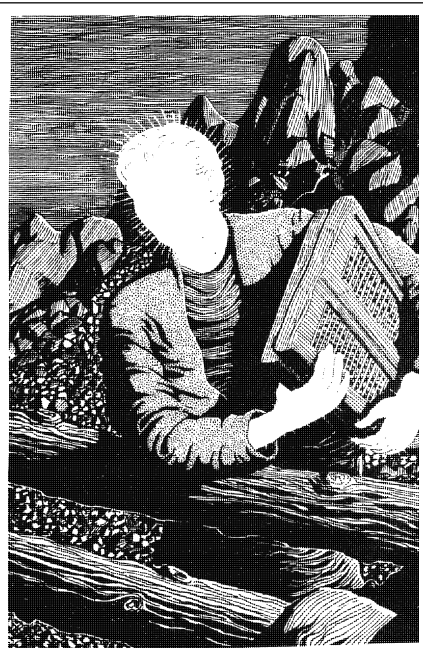
Now that's quite plain, isn't it? Christ NEVER INTENDED for the hierarchical form of government to be used in His Church! He did not create a body with TWO HEADS!

The Marriage Covenant

There is a VITAL KEY to this question that has been overlooked time and time again, and that is the MARRIAGE COVENANT which existed between Israel and the Eternal. Back in *Exodus 24* we read of the

And so a NEW COVENANT will be made with Israel and Judah, and the KINGDOM will be restored to Israel -- with the ORIGINAL form of Church government!

Moses at Mt. Sinai



covenant made between God and the children of Israel; and this covenant was a MARRIAGE CEREMONY joining God and His people together as husband and wife. IT WAS THIS MARRIAGE THAT FORMED GOD'S PEOPLE INTO AN ORGANIZATION HAVING THE RIGHT TYPE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT! This marriage is a TYPE of the coming marriage between the Church and Christ.

God promised His people at this ceremony that if they would be OBEDIENT -- as a wife should be to her husband -- they would become "a KINGDOM of priests, and a holy NATION" -- a church GOVERNMENT.

Since this is the case, it naturally follows that this ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT of the children of Israel was to last ONLY AS LONG AS THE MARRIAGE UNION WHICH ESTABLISHED IT! If, for some reason, the marriage was done away with -- a DIVORCE takes place -- then the ORGANIZATION and the GOVERNMENT will, at that very same time, be done away with. It was ONLY this marriage relationship which established the organization -- the kingdom and government of the people.

Now, in *Leviticus 26*, God plainly shows that there are blessings available to the children of Israel IF they are loyal to the marriage covenant; BUT -- and notice this -- there are PUNISHMENTS for disloyalty. In

verses 14 through 39 we see that the PUNISHMENTS for breaking the marriage covenant are many, and include "those that hate you shall reign over you..." (verse 17) and "you shall have NO POWER to stand before your enemies." (Verse 37).

In other words, if the children of Israel should prove DISLOYAL to the marriage covenant, then the husband -- CHRIST -- would take away His form of GOVERNMENT from His wife -- the children of Israel. He would then give them the GOVERNMENT (hierarchical) of the Gentiles UNTIL THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, when the correct church government shall be RESTORED to Israel!

As every Bible scholar knows, Israel DID NOT remain faithful to God; and He was forced to give them -- His WIFE -- a BILL OF DIVORCE. This divorce cut off His government from among the children of Israel; and Christ is coming to RESTORE the kingdom, along with GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION, to God's people. The Israelites have had to suffer a hierarchical form of government -- with variations -- ever since!

At His return Christ will REMARRY His wife whom He divorced. Since Christ died to REDEEM Israel, Israel will be free to marry again! And so a NEW COVENANT will be made with Israel and Judah; and the KINGDOM will be restored to

Israel -- with the ORIGINAL form of Church government!

Jesus' disciples clearly understood that the kingdom, along with God's GOVERNMENT, had been taken away from their people. In *Acts 1:6* the disciples asked Christ, "Lord, are you at this time going to RESTORE the kingdom to Israel?"

But Christ DID NOT restore it at His first coming. He did not bring His form of government back. This will occur at His SECOND COMING.

Let Mr. Armstrong add, from his 1939 article, the following:

The AUTHORITY to RULE and to GOVERN was now taken away from the people of God, because of disobedience...There is not one single HINT in the New Testament of any Church BOARD with authority to rule, to govern, to decide doctrine, or to handle tithes and church finances (the whole church)...Jesus never organized, or reorganized His Church! There is NO SCRIPTURE for it!

Running a Tight Ship?

Paul makes it quite plain, in the first chapter of Galatians, that there was NO central government, or HEADQUARTERS with a man at the HEAD, ruling over the early New Testament Church:

But when God, who set me apart from birth, and CALLED me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I DID NOT CONSULT ANY MAN, NOR DID I GO UP TO JERUSALEM TO SEE THOSE

WHO WERE APOSTLES BEFORE I WAS, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then AFTER THREE YEARS, I WENT UP TO JERUSALEM TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH PETER and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles -- only James, the Lord's brother... Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a REVELATION and SET BEFORE THEM THE GOSPEL THAT I PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES. But I did this privately TO THOSE WHO SEEMED TO BE LEADERS,

Paul makes it quite plain...that there was NO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, or headquarters, with a man at the HEAD, ruling over the early New Testament Church!

for fear that I was running or run my race in vain...AS FOR THOSE WHO SEEMED TO BE IMPORTANT -- WHATEVER THEY WERE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME; God does not judge by external appearance -- THESE MEN ADDED NOTHING TO MY MESSAGE. On the contrary, they saw that I had been given the task [by God] of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews...James, Peter and John, THOSE REPUTED TO BE PILLARS, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to REMEMBER THE POOR, the very thing I was eager to do...(Verses 15-19, 2:1-2, 2:6-10).

Did you notice a few things in this passage?

First of all, Paul says that immediately after he was called by God "I did NOT consult ANY MAN, nor did I GO UP TO

JERUSALEM to see those who were apostles before I was...AFTER 3 YEARS, I went up to Jerusalem to get ACQUAINTED WITH PETER..."

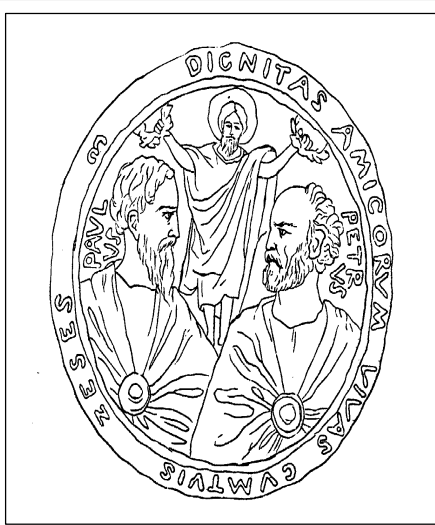
This would be an UNACCEPTABLE situation under the hierarchical system of government. Can you imagine someone in the Worldwide Church of God just popping up out of nowhere, preaching all over the countryside; and then, after 3 years, deciding to go to headquarters in Pasadena to get ACQUAINTED with one of the evangelists -- and NOT seek approval for his actions? Somehow I don't think that would work!

Secondly, it wasn't until 14 YEARS LATER that Paul went up to Jerusalem to let the people there know what he had been doing for the last 14 or so years! And was he SUMMONED to Jerusalem by the head apostle or leader of the Church of God? No, not at all! He went to Jerusalem "in response to a REVELATION...!"

Did you get that?

Doesn't that seem incredible to you -- Jerusalem certainly wasn't running a very tight ship!! Then, on top of all this, Paul says: "As for those WHO SEEMED TO BE IMPORTANT -- whatever they were makes no difference to me...these men ADDED NOTHING to my message."

What a put down!



Traditional Pictures of Paul and Peter

Does this sound like Peter is in control -- heading up the apostles at headquarters in Jerusalem? By no stretch of the imagination!

A Joseph Tkach or a Rod Meredith would not like to hear that! Some egos, I think, would be in jeopardy!

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO SIGN OF A HIERARCHICAL TYPE OF GOVERNMENT IN THIS PASSAGE!

The Chief Apostle?

In the book *The Incredible Human Potential*, Herbert Armstrong has this to say regarding the apostle Peter: "On that Day of Pentecost, it was Peter, CHIEF APOSTLE (emphasis mine), who proclaimed the Gospel Message -- and that day God ADDED three thousand baptized that same day." Can we find, anywhere in the New Testament, any sign that Peter was the CHIEF APOSTLE of all the others, and thereby a LEADER of the entire Church? Let Mr. Armstrong answer that! In his 1939 article he made this observation:

An apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one UNDER authority -- one SENT by the authority of another! The only power and authority Jesus ever gave even His original twelve was to heal the sick, and cast out demons. And He SENT them, not to rule, but to PREACH -- not to BEAR authority, but to MINISTER, to serve!

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find the slightest hint that the twelve constituted a higher-up church board, and nowhere were they ever given power to rule, or govern, or decide what doctrines the other disciples must believe.

The *Aid to Bible Understanding*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract

Society of New York, clearly states: "There is NO EVIDENCE of the PRIMACY of any one apostle in the established Christian congregation. Peter and John appear to have been especially prominent at Pentecost and immediately thereafter, with Peter acting as the principle spokesman...However, in the decisions made at that time neither of these appears to have a SUPERIORITY OVER THE OTHERS of the governing body, and, when news arrived of the baptisms taking place in Samaria, the APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM 'dispatched Peter and John to them,' so that these two served, in effect, as APOSTLES OF THE APOSTLES."

No sign of any primacy here!

This is made abundantly clear in *Acts II*, which relates the following:

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, THE CIRCUMCISED BELIEVERS CRITICIZED HIM and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." Peter began and EXPLAINED EVERYTHING to them precisely as it had happened...when they heard this, they had no further OBJECTIONS and praised God, saying, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life."

Does this sound like Peter is in CONTROL -- heading up the apostles at headquarters in Jerusalem? By no stretch of the imagination!

If Peter was in control -- wielding **AUTHORITY AND POWER** -- then the following would be **IMPOSSIBLE**: "When Peter came to Antioch, I [Paul] **OPPOSED HIM** to his face, because he was in the wrong...When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter **IN FRONT OF THEM ALL**, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?'" (*Galatians 2:11,14*).

Now that we have proved conclusively -- using Mr. Armstrong's own material -- that the **HIERARCHICAL** form of government simply **DID NOT EXIST** in the fledgling New Testament Church, nor was Peter a **CHIEF APOSTLE** with authority over the others, let us see if God had **ANY SORT OF ORGANIZATION** within His Church.

The Body of Christ

The New Testament **DOES SHOW** that there is some organization in God's Church -- especially at the **LOCAL CHURCH** level. Also, the apostles did have the authority to make decisions concerning problems within the Church, as evidenced by *Acts 15*. Here, at the council at Jerusalem, the apostles and **ELDERS** of the Jerusalem Church met together and came to agreement on the matter of uncircumcised brethren. The decision reached was binding on the Church as *Acts 16:4* shows: "As

they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and **ELDERS** in Jerusalem for the people to obey."

However, it was not very often that **ALL** the apostles were in Jerusalem together since they were continually out in the field; hence the council of *Acts 15* was more the exception than the rule.

As we mentioned earlier,

Now, does ANY MAN have the right -- FROM ALMIGHTY GOD -- to be known and looked up to as GOD'S APOSTLE at this time -- in this age?

the New Testament likens the Church to the human body, Christ being the **HEAD**. In *Romans 12* Paul elaborates on this:

Just as each of us has one **BODY** with many members, and these **MEMBERS** do not all have the same function, so in **CHRIST WE WHO ARE MANY FORM ONE BODY, AND EACH MEMBER BELONGS TO ALL THE OTHERS**. We have different **GIFTS** according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is **LEADERSHIP**, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. -- Verses 4 through 8.

Paul repeats this, with some variation, in *I Corinthians 12*.

In this same chapter -- starting in verse 27 -- Paul begins to define, in detail, the

structure of the New Testament Church:

Now you are the **BODY OF CHRIST**, and each of you is a part of it. And in the Church of God has appointed **FIRST OF ALL** apostles, **SECOND** prophets, **THIRD** teachers, **THEN** workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to keep others, those with **GIFTS OF ADMINISTRATION**, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire **THE GREATER GIFTS**.

In *Ephesians 4:11* he adds one more function to the list: "It was he who gave some to be **APOSTLES**, some to be **PROPHETS**, some to be **EVANGELISTS**, and some to be **PASTORS and TEACHERS**, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature..." Let us use this list as the guide in our search for the **CORRECT FORM** of Church organization.

Apostles

Mr. Armstrong liked to be known as God's apostle, and over the years had gone from being one of the ministers of the "true church" to being **AN** apostle to being the **ONLY** apostle of the twentieth century. Also, at one time, some ministers of the Worldwide Church of God began referring to Mr. Armstrong as the **HOLY** apostle. Mr. Joseph

Mr. Armstrong had NO RIGHT to call himself an apostle of Christ during his lifetime -- and Mr. Tkach has NO RIGHT to do so today!

Tkach now continues in this same TRADITION.

Now, does ANY MAN have the right -- FROM ALMIGHTY GOD -- to be known and looked up to as GOD'S APOSTLE at this time -- in this age?

In *Matthew 10:1* we read, "He [Christ] called his twelve disciples to him and GAVE THEM AUTHORITY TO DRIVE OUT EVIL SPIRITS AND TO HEAL EVERY DISEASE AND SICKNESS."

In *Mark 3:14* is mentioned additional responsibilities of the apostles: "He [Christ] appointed twelve -- designating them APOSTLES -- that they might BE WITH HIM and that he might SEND THEM OUT TO PREACH and have authority to drive out demons."

Paul states in *II Corinthians 12:11* that "the things that MARK AN APOSTLE -- SIGNS, WONDERS AND MIRACLES -- were done among you [by Paul] with great perseverance."

Mr. Armstrong -- in his 1939 article -- corroborates Matthew and Mark:

When Jesus called them [the apostles], and ordained them, did He give them AUTHORITY TO RULE? Just what did He give them POWER and AUTHORITY to do?

Notice it, in *Luke 9:1-2*:

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and GAVE THEM

POWER AND AUTHORITY" -- for what? To GOVERN? To RULE the Church? Notice carefully! Let us have a BIBLE REASON for all we accept and do!..."...and gave them power and authority over ALL DEVILS, AND TO CURE DISEASES. And he SENT THEM to " -- He sent them to WHAT? To rule and govern? To have supervision over the spiritual affairs of an organization? Notice it, IN THE BIBLE!..."He sent them TO PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND TO HEAL THE SICK."

Armstrong continues:

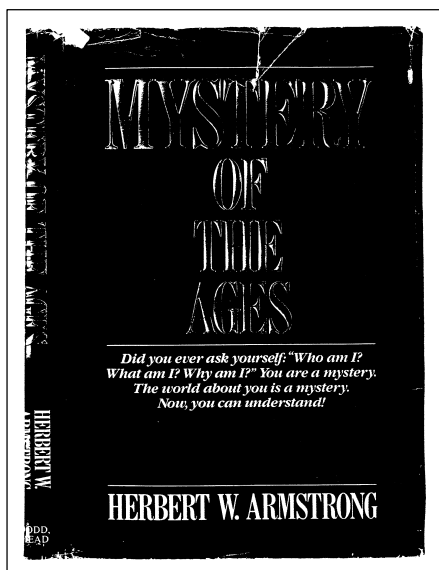
...An apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one UNDER authority -- one SENT by the authority of another! The only power and authority Jesus ever gave even His original twelve was to heal the sick, and cast out demons. And He SENT them, not to rule, but to PREACH -- not to BEAR authority, but to MINISTER, to serve!

From the foregoing statements it becomes apparent that there are a number of "marks" that identify a TRUE apostle of God. These can be enumerated as follows:

- 1/. The authority to DRIVE OUT EVIL SPIRITS AND TO HEAL EVERY DISEASE AND SICKNESS.
- 2/. To have BEEN WITH CHRIST and also to have WITNESSED HIS RESURRECTION.
- 3/. To be SENT OUT TO PREACH.
- 4/. To be DIRECTLY CALLED by Christ.

A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings, comments on some of these qualifications:

Herbert Armstrong's Magnum Opus



The FIRST QUALIFICATION of the apostle was to have 'SEEN THE LORD' (Lk.24:48, Acts 1:8,22, I Cor.9:1), for his FIRST DUTY was to bear witness of the Lord's resurrection (e.g. also Acts 2:32)...We have NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THIS CONDITION WAS EVER WAIVED, unless we throw forward the Teaching into the 2nd cent. The SECOND QUALIFICATION was (2 Cor.12:12) the 'SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE,' which consisted partly in all patience, partly in signs and wonders and powers, and partly again (e.g. I Cor.9:2) in effective work among his own converts...A DIRECT CALL was also needed, for NO HUMAN AUTHORITY COULD CHOOSE AN APOSTLE.

Did Mr. Armstrong, throughout his lifetime: 1. Drive out evil spirits and heal every disease and sickness; 2. accompany Christ and witness his resurrection; 3. become directly called by Christ? Does JOSEPH TKACH fulfill these "marks" today?

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Mr. Armstrong had NO RIGHT to call himself an apostle of Christ during his lifetime -- and Mr. Tkach has NO RIGHT to do so today!

ANYBODY WHO CLAIMS TO BE AN APOSTLE OF GOD AND DOESN'T FULFILL THE ABOVE QUALIFICATIONS IS A FALSE APOSTLE!!

Mr. Armstrong says so himself in his 1939 article!!

Search the Scriptures as we may, we cannot find any other purpose for the twelve apostles, except to go out and preach, and heal, and to be

WITH Jesus thruout His ministry, in order that they might forever PROVE the TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION! That was the only reason for the definite number of TWELVE! To suppose that this definite number of twelve was to be continued and perpetuated AFTER THEIR MISSION WAS FULFILLED is absurd!...There is NO SCRIPTURE even hinting that the twelve were continued. On the other hand, every Scriptural indication is that THEY WERE NOT. Even the authors of "A History of the True Church" were unable to find any continuance of THE TWELVE in the TRUE Church!

That ought to settle the matter.

"In spite of the theory of 'APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION' that developed in the church's doctrine of the ministry, the TITLE AND OFFICE of apostle were NOT transferable and DIED OUT with the passing of the original bearers of the name."

The Scriptures speak of FALSE APOSTLES, and of "them which SAY they are apostles, and are not, but hast found them LIARS." (I Cor.11:13; Rev.2:2). -- *Did Christ Reorganize the Church* by Herbert W. Armstrong. Feb. 1939.

Mr. Tkach -- TAKE NOTE OF WHAT YOUR PREDECESSOR SAID!

The *Aid to Bible Understanding* makes the truth quite PLAIN: "It is evident from Peter's statements that it was then considered that any individual filling the position of an apostle of Jesus Christ must have the qualifications of having been PERSONALLY CONVERSANT WITH HIM, having been an eyewitness of his works, his miracles and particularly of his resurrection. In view of this it can be seen that any APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION would in

the course of time become an IMPOSSIBILITY, unless there were DIVINE ACTION to supply these requirements in each individual case." -- Page 93.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, published by the Abingdon Press, backs this up:

In spite of the theory of "APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION" that developed in the church's doctrine of the ministry, the TITLE AND OFFICE of apostle were NOT TRANSFERABLE and DIED OUT with the passing of the original bearers of the name. Whenever it is applied to individuals in later Christian literature, the use of the term is metaphorical. THE CHURCH HAS NEVER HAD APOSTLES IN THE NT SENSE SINCE THE FIRST CENTURY. -- Vol.1, page 172. Article "Apostle."

In order to substantiate his claim to be an apostle of God, Herbert Armstrong wrote, in the *Mystery of the Ages*, that "an apostle was given supervision over all the local congregations or churches (I Cor.16:1). The apostle Paul has oversight over the churches of the Gentile world (II Cor.11:28)." (Page 244).

Is there any PROOF for this claim?

The *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, says no: "The apostle's relation to the Churches he founded was naturally INDEFINITE. He would (Acts 14:23) choose their FIRST LOCAL OFFICIALS, start them in the right way, and



"Marks" of an Apostle?

The Worldwide Church of God and many of its offshoots are practicing a HIERARCHICAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT -- just like Gentile nations have for centuries!

generally help them with fatherly counsel (I Cor.4:14,15) when he saw occasion. THERE IS NO SIGN THAT HE TOOK ANY SHARE IN THEIR ORDINARY ADMINISTRATION. St. Paul interferes with it only in cases where the Churches have gone SERIOUSLY WRONG... Questions referred to him he answers as far as possible on general principles, giving (I Cor.7) a command of the Lord when he can, and in default of it an OPINION of his own, and sometimes a hint that they need not have asked him. In general, the apostle IS NOT A REGULAR RULER in the same sense as a modern bishop, but an OCCASIONAL REFEREE...who acts only in case of special need."

The New Testament bears this out in a number of passages where Paul is dealing with some problems in local church areas. Notice his ATTITUDE:

I CORINTHIANS 1:10: I APPEAL TO YOU, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you may agree with one another...

I CORINTHIANS 16:12: Now about our brother Apollos: I STRONGLY URGED HIM to go to you with the brothers. He was QUITE UNWILLING to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

II CORINTHIANS 8:8: I am NOT COMMANDING YOU, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing...And HERE IS MY

ADVICE about what is best for you in this matter.

II CORINTHIANS 9:5: So I thought it necessary to URGE THE BROTHERS to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised.

II CORINTHIANS 10:1: By the MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST, I APPEAL TO YOU I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I BEG YOU that when I come I may not have to be as BOLD as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

GALATIANS 4:12: I PLEAD WITH YOU, brothers, become like me, for I became like you.

EPHESIANS 4:1: As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I URGE YOU to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

PHILIPPIANS 4:2: I PLEAD with Euodia and I PLEAD with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

II CORINTHIANS 13:11: Finally, brothers, goodbye. Aim for perfection, LISTEN TO MY APPEAL, live in peace.

Does this sound like a man who is Head over the Gentile Churches, lording it over them and passing judgment on behavior and doctrine and issuing decrees and pronouncements

as though he were the SOLE AUTHORITY? NOT AT ALL!

Have you seen this sort of HUMILITY in the Pastor-General's Report, or in any other of the publications that go out to the ministries of the Worldwide Church of God, the Global Church of God and others? I doubt that you have.

The Worldwide Church of God and many of its offshoots are practicing a HIERARCHICAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT -- just like Gentile nations have for centuries!

It should be mentioned here, however, that when necessary Paul DID act WITH AUTHORITY and REBUKED those who refused to heed his appeals. There is no doubt of this in *I Corinthians 4*:

Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of POWER. What do you prefer? SHALL I COME TO YOU WITH A WHIP, or in love and with a gentle spirit? -- Verse 18-21.

Let the apostle Paul relate what the CORRECT role of an apostle was during the fledgling Church, and what lengths an apostle went to to build, uplift, edify and encourage the people of God: "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? ONLY SERVANTS, through whom you came to believe -- as the Lord

has assigned to each his task. I PLANTED THE SEED, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow...The man who PLANTS and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor." (*I Cor.3:5-8*).

"Now, brothers, I have applied these things to MYSELF AND APOLLOS for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'DO

Somehow, traveling around the world in a plush jet aircraft, staying at fancy hotels, and eating with the rich and famous doesn't strike me as the way to serve, encourage, uplift, strengthen and NOT BURDEN the people of God!

NOT GO BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN"! Then you will not take pride in ONE MAN OVER AGAINST ANOTHER" (*I Cor.4:6*).

Paul continues, explaining his attitude to the local churches:

Was it a sin to LOWER MYSELF IN ORDER TO ELEVATE YOU by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so to SERVE you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was NOT A BURDEN to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself FROM BEING A BURDEN to you in any way, and WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. -- *II Cor.11:7-9*.

...we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are NOT TRYING TO PLEASE MEN but God, who tests our hearts. You know WE NEVER USED

FLATTERY, NOR DID WE PUT ON A MASK TO COVER UP GREED -- God is our witness. We were NOT LOOKING FOR PRAISE from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but WE WERE GENTLE AMONG YOU, LIKE A MOTHER CARING FOR HER LITTLE CHILDREN. We loved you so much that we were delighted to SHARE WITH YOU not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, OUR TOIL AND HARDSHIP; WE WORKED NIGHT AND DAY IN ORDER NOT TO BE A BURDEN TO ANYONE while we preached the gospel of God to you...ENCOURAGING, EXHORTING AND URGING you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. -- *I Thesalonians 2:4-12*.

What a wonderful attitude -- the ATTITUDE OF GOD AT WORK in this man Paul!

Joseph Tkach, Gerald Flurry, Rod Meredith -- TAKE NOTE!!

The work of the apostle was to preach the GOOD NEWS and to be an AMBASSADOR on behalf of Jesus Christ. He was to be a WITNESS to all nations of the RESURRECTED CHRIST, and to make disciples of them. The whole world was his mission field; and he had NO FIXED ABODE for any length of time. The apostle belonged to the Church in general and had no local ties. His life was spent in journeyings, in labors, and in distresses.

It is crystal clear -- it plainly says "as it has NOW been revealed by the spirit to God's holy apostles AND PROPHETS." THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WAS FOUNDED ON THE NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS, NOT THE OLD!

Herbert W. Armstrong



Paul graphically described his life in *I Corinthians 4:9-13*:

For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display AT THE END OF THE PROCESSION, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a SPECTACLE to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. WE ARE FOOLS FOR CHRIST, but you are so wise in Christ!

WE ARE WEAK, but you are strong! You are honored, WE ARE DISHONORED! TO THIS VERY HOUR WE GO HUNGRY AND THIRSTY, WE ARE IN RAGS, WE ARE BRUTALLY TREATED, WE ARE HOMELESS. WE WORK HARD WITH OUR OWN HANDS...Up to this moment we have BECOME THE SCUM OF THE EARTH, THE REFUSE OF THE WORLD.

Somehow, traveling around the world in a plush jet aircraft, staying at fancy hotels, and eating with the rich and famous doesn't strike me as the way to serve, encourage, uplift, strengthen and NOT BURDEN the people of God! The TRUE APOSTLES OF GOD are probably turning over in their graves!

In summation, the apostles were PERSONALLY SELECTED by Christ "that they might be with him and that he might SEND THEM OUT to preach and to have AUTHORITY" -- authority to do what? -- "to drive out demons." (*Mark 3:14-15*). They were to be WITNESSES of Jesus Christ's fulfillment of the Eternal God's purposes and prophecies and, especially, of His (Christ's) death and resurrection. And when they died, the office of apostle DIED WITH THEM!

THE CHURCH OF GOD HAS NEVER HAD LITERAL APOSTLES SINCE THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.!!

Prophets

Let us, for a moment, return to Paul's outline in *Ephesians 4:11*: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, SOME TO BE PROPHETS, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature..."

In *The Incredible Human Potential*, Herbert Armstrong comments on Paul's outline of local Church structure in the following manner: "Notice, again, the "household of God" -- the CHURCH -- is built upon a FOUNDATION. Would one build a BUILDING on a foundation of shifting sand? God's Church is built upon 'the FOUNDATION of the apostles (the New Testament), and prophets (Old Testament, whose prophecies are for US TODAY (*I Cor.10:11*)), Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone' (*Eph.2:19-20*)." (Everest House Publishers, New York. Page 120).

In his other book, *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr. Armstrong adds this: "The prophets set in the foundation of the Church are those of the OLD TESTAMENT, whose writings were used to form a considerable part of New

Testament and gospel teaching and functioning. No prophets are mentioned as having either administrative, executive or preaching functions in the New Testament Church." (Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. Page 244-245).

What about this? Can we verify Mr. Armstrong's conclusions in the Bible? Yes -- but only PARTIALLY! The Church of God *was* indeed built upon the foundation of the New Testament apostles -- but WHAT ABOUT THE PROPHETS? According to Mr. Armstrong the Church was also founded on the OLD TESTAMENT *prophets*. Is this correct? Let us take a CLOSE look at *Ephesians 2* and find out. Is the New Testament Church indeed founded on the OLD TESTAMENT prophets?

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit...(*Ephesians 2:19-22*).

Now, notice THIS:

In reading this [Paul's letter], then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in OTHER generations AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT TO GOD'S HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. -- *Ephesians 3:4-5*.

How did Mr. Armstrong miss this? It is crystal clear -- it plainly says "as it has NOW been revealed by the spirit to God's holy apostles AND PROPHETS." THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WAS FOUNDED ON THE NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS, NOT THE OLD! If Mr. Armstrong had read down a little further in *Ephesians 3*, he would have seen this.

Ephesians 4 shows that the office of prophet is the next most important function to that of apostle in the New Testament Church. And since the office of apostle no longer exists -- that of the prophet IS NOW THE MOST IMPORTANT!

Actually, I believe Mr. Armstrong did see it, but chose to ignore this truth when he decided he was going to fill the office of an apostle of God. He couldn't afford to acknowledge the role of prophets in the New Testament Church because this would put his position as HEAD of the Church in jeopardy! He claimed that new truth ONLY CAME INTO THE CHURCH THROUGH HIM, whereas the Bible lucidly shows that truth came into the first century Church through BOTH the apostles and the *PROPHETS*.

Since the office of apostle died out with the original apostles -- new truth now comes into the Church of God THROUGH PROPHETS!

Can we understand that?

If Mr. Armstrong allowed this, then the whole concept of the HIERARCHICAL form of government in the Church would simply CRUMBLE!

The Worldwide Church of God is so addicted to this concept of government that when Mr. Dankenbring approached the leadership with new truth, they had to reject it. They BLINDLY believe that new truth comes into the Church through Joseph Tkach, and Joseph Tkach alone!

And since they believe this, they will be waiting FOREVER -- BECAUSE THE OFFICE OF APOSTLE NO LONGER EXISTS!!

What a crying shame! Do you now see the effect that the WRONG FORM OF GOVERNMENT can have?

In the above passage out of *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr. Armstrong authoritatively states, "No prophets are mentioned as having either administrative, executive or preaching functions in the New Testament Church." A CURSORY examination of *Acts 15* will reveal this to be totally in ERROR!

Note -- starting in *Acts 15:22*: "Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were LEADERS among the brothers. With them they sent the following letter...Therefore we

The Incredible Human Potential

This is the eye-opening story of the real gospel message of Jesus Christ — of how this missing dimension was withheld, and the whole world deceived.

Herbert W. Armstrong

This is WHY the Worldwide Church of God (and others) has gone so far off the track -- by IGNORING the office of prophet they are QUENCHING THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing...Judas and Silas, WHO THEMSELVES WERE PROPHETS, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers." (*Acts 15:22-23, 15:27, 15:32*).

Did you notice here that Judas and Silas were LEADERS in the Church -- as well as PROPHETS? The Greek word for "leaders," or more properly "leading" men, means: a governor, a general, a prefect. (See *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, by John Dawson). So these men certainly did have "administrative" or "executive" duties -- as Mr. Armstrong puts it -- within God's Church; and in all likelihood they were elders in the Jerusalem Church. Also, the word "said" in *Acts 15:32* comes from the Greek word that means: a speech, eloquence, power of speech; denoting preaching! So Judas and Silas were leaders, preachers and prophets; and, therefore, Mr. Armstrong's statement has NO VALIDITY whatsoever!

We can further substantiate this by going to the *Book of Revelation*. In the eleventh chapter we read about the two witnesses who prophesy and call down plagues for 3 1/2 years. In my article, *Behold -- I will Send You Elijah the Prophet*, I demonstrate that these two men are not only prophets -- the Elijah and Elisha to come -- but also LEADERS (overseers) in the Church of God. It should be obvious to say that in order to fulfill the offices of overseer and

prophet, the role of preacher must also be entertained!

Ephesians 4 shows that the office of prophet is the next most important function to that of apostle in the New Testament Church. And since the office of apostle no longer exists -- that of the prophet IS NOW THE MOST IMPORTANT! Throughout his letters Paul STRESSES the importance and desirability of the role of prophet:

I THESSALONIANS 5:19:

Do not put out the spirits fire; DO NOT TREAT PROPHECIES WITH CONTEMPT. Test everything. Hold on to the good.

I CORINTHIANS 14:1:

Follow the way of love and EAGERLY DESIRE spiritual gifts, ESPECIALLY THE GIFT OF PROPHECY. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit BUT EVERYONE WHO PROPHECIES SPEAKS TO MEN FOR THEIR STRENGTHENING, ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMFORT. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but HE WHO PROPHECIES EDIFIES THE CHURCH. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU PROPHECY. HE WHO PROPHECIES IS GREATER THAN ONE WHO SPEAKS IN TONGUES, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you

some REVELATION OR KNOWLEDGE?

I CORINTHIANS 14:22: Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; PROPHECY, HOWEVER, IS FOR BELIEVERS, NOT UNBELIEVERS...But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in WHILE EVERYBODY IS PROPHECYING, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all...

I CORINTHIANS 14:39: Therefore, my brothers, BE EAGER TO PROPHECY, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Paul clearly indicates the importance of the office of prophet, and even goes so far as to say that treating prophecies with contempt is equivalent to QUENCHING God's spirit. This is WHY the Worldwide Church of God (and others) have gone so far off the track -- by IGNORING the office of prophet they are QUENCHING THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

HOW CAN THEY RECEIVE NEW TRUTH?!

By COVETING an office that NO LONGER EXISTS and quenching the spirit of God by IGNORING the office of PROPHET, there is no way God can reveal new understanding to this Church! Any "new" understanding they claim to come up

with CANNOT BE FROM GOD!

The role of prophet in the neophyte New Testament Church was so COMMON that Paul had to give instructions for the orderly conduct of Sabbath services:

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a REVELATION, a tongue or an interpretation. ALL of these must be done for the STRENGTHENING

We can see here that the office of apostle and that of evangelist are very similar...the only difference being that an apostle was ALSO to be a witness of the life and death and resurrection of Christ.

OF THE CHURCH...Two or three PROPHETS should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a REVELATION comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all PROPHECY in turn so that everyone may be INSTRUCTED AND ENCOURAGED. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. -- **I Cor.14**

This totally contradicts Mr. Armstrong's explanation as to how God infuses truth into His Church. Notice what he says on page 121 of *The Incredible Human Potential*:

How does God infuse HIS TRUTH into the Church? NOT through each individual separately -- but through the apostles, and other ministers under them.

In the time of the first apostles -- first century -- the Bible was not yet completely written. God used a very few prophets, through whom He communicated. The prophets gave the

message to an apostle. Today the Bible is complete. God has used no prophets in the Church in our time.

However, the laity of the first century received their teaching and instruction from THE APOSTLES.

Here Mr. Armstrong tries to relegate the role of prophet to that of little importance; but we have just seen from the New Testament that Paul placed GREAT IMPORTANCE on this role. God used A NUMBER of prophets in the early Church --

witness Agabus and Judas and Silas. "In the church at Antioch THERE WERE PROPHETS and teachers:" (*Acts 13:1*). We have just seen that prophets COMMONLY gave their messages or revelations to ALL PRESENT during

Sabbath services -- not just to the apostles. How can Mr. Armstrong say that just "a very few prophets" were used in the fledgling Church?

Mr. Armstrong's comment that "the Bible is complete" and therefore "God has no prophets in the Church in our time" is meant, once again, to downgrade and negate the role of prophet -- but the TRUTH of the Bible proclaims otherwise. The reason why there have been no prophets in "our time" is simply because the Worldwide Church of God and her offshoots have not allowed them!

Now, however, the Eternal God is sending prophets in the spirit of Elijah and Elisha to instill new understanding into His Church, because His end time Philadelphia Church (NOT

The reason why, over the centuries, the evangelical work of God's Church died out at various times, was because of a lack of CORRECT understanding of Church government.

Gerald Flurry's group) IS practicing the RIGHT FORM OF GOVERNMENT -- and therefore is NOT quenching the spirit of God!

I think it is interesting to note that Paul went up to Jerusalem -- in *Acts 15* -- as the result of a REVELATION, not as the result of a command or summons from the "head apostle" or "pastor-general" in Jerusalem. And how is a revelation received? Through a PROPHET, of course!

CHRIST INFUSED TRUTH INTO HIS CHURCH THROUGH APOSTLES AND PROPHETS; AND SINCE THE OFFICE OF APOSTLE NO LONGER EXISTS, TRUTH NOW COMES INTO THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH THROUGH THOSE WHOM GOD CALLS TO BE PRO-PHETS!

It was he [Christ] who gave some to be...PROPHETS ...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...(*Ephesians 4:11*).

Evangelists

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, SOME TO BE EVANGELISTS, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...(*Ephesians 4:11-13*).

The word "evangelist" is mentioned three times in the Bible, including the above passage

from *Ephesians 4*. The other two passages are as follows:

ACTS 21:8: Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the EVANGELIST, one of the seven.

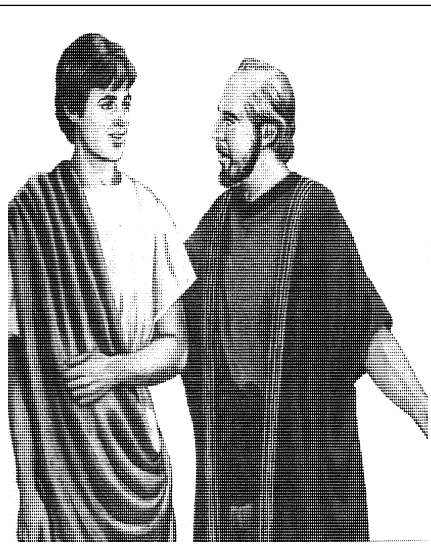
II Timothy 4:5: But you [Timothy], keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an EVANGELIST, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

The word for evangelist in the original Greek is "euaggelistes" -- which means: a publisher of good tidings, a preacher of the Gospel. (*A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, by John Dawson).

According to *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, "The term 'Evangelist' seems to have been almost synonymous with our word 'Missionary.' It is applied to Philip and Timothy."

On page 342 of this same publication the role of evangelist is further explained: "The term Evangelist is applied to those missionaries, who, like Philip, and Timothy, traveled from place to place, to bear the Glad-tidings of Christ to unbelieving nations or individuals. Hence it follows that the APOSTLES WERE ALL EVANGELISTS, although there were also EVANGELISTS WHO WERE NOT APOSTLES." (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan).

Evangelist Timothy with Paul



Interestingly, *Cruden's Concordance* defines the word APOSTLE as : "One sent forth. Used as referring (1) chiefly to one of the 12 disciples of Christ; or (2) to any of various other followers of Christ who did EVANGELISTIC work."

We can see here that the office of apostle and that of evangelist are very similar -- there is a merging of responsibilities. The only difference is that an apostle was ALSO to be a witness of the life and death and resurrection of Christ.

The *Aid to Bible Understanding* states the following:

The specific work of such evangelists was MISSIONARY work. Often these would OPEN NEW FIELDS where the good news HAD NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY PREACHED. Evangelizers PRECEDE shepherds and teachers in the listing at Ephesians 4:11, for after the good news has been preached and disciples have been made, the shepherds and teachers do a further building work from that point.

Doesn't that sound EXACTLY like the work of an APOSTLE? "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." (*I Cor.3:6*). Also, in *Romans 15:20*: "It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ WAS NOT KNOWN, so that I [Paul] would not be building on someone else's FOUNDATION."

It is obvious that the role of apostle and evangelist are one and the same, with the

EXCEPTION of the "marks" of an apostle.

In the list of offices outlined in *I Corinthians 12:28*, we find the role of evangelist MISSING altogether, yet ADDED later on in *Ephesians 4:11*. Doesn't that seem odd? Did Paul just FORGET to include this office in Corinthians? No, not at all -- Paul is revealing something very important about Church government here.

Evangelists, like apostles, did not share in the ordinary administration of the local churches -- this was left up to the OVERSEERS.

DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CHURCH THE OFFICE OF EVANGELIST WAS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE OPERATIONS OF THE CHURCH BECAUSE THE APOSTLES WERE CARRYING OUT THE SAME ROLE!!

But what was to happen when the apostles died and the office of apostle died out with them? Who would then do the missionary work of the Church? Who would PLANT so that Apollos could water? Why, the EVANGELISTS of course! Paul added the office of evangelist to the list in *Ephesians 4:11* to show that the work of preaching the gospel to the world (see *Matthew 28:19-20*) would CONTINUE after the death of the apostles.

On the list of *I Corinthians 12:28* we see that the

missionary or evangelical work of the APOSTLES paves the way for the shepherds (elders) and teachers; while in *Ephesians 4:11* the missionary or evangelical work of the EVANGELISTS paves the way for the shepherds and teachers. Same role!

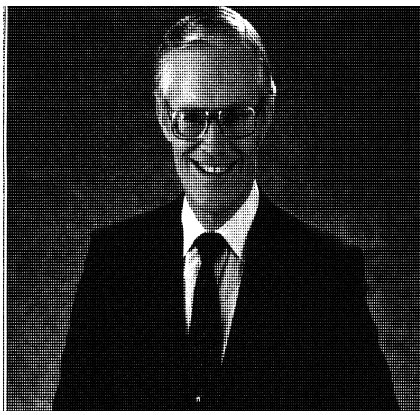
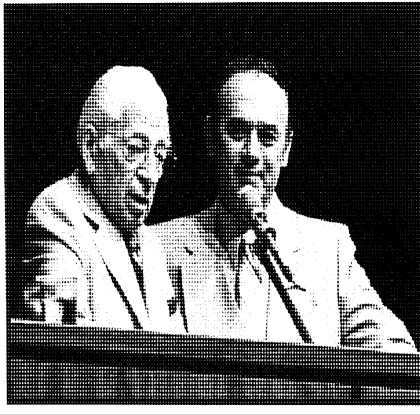
During the lifetime of the apostles the evangelists Philip and Timothy -- and others -- were being trained for a specific role that would continue on after the apostles left the scene.

Since the office of evangelist was not identified by all the "marks" of the apostolic office (i.e. DIRECTLY called by Christ, etc.), it was not

limited to a particular time period and would thus continue on throughout the history of God's Church. So during the first century the APOSTLES had the main responsibility of preaching the gospel to the world; and then, after their death, the EVANGELISTS carried on this vital work.

The reason why, over the centuries, the evangelical work of God's Church died out at various times was because of a lack of CORRECT understanding of Church government.

By studying the lives of Philip and Timothy we can learn a lot about the role of evangelist. In *Acts 8* we read about Philip going down to Samaria: "Those who had been scattered PREACHED THE WORD WHEREVER THEY WENT. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there...And he [Simon Magus]



Apostles of Christ?



followed Philip EVERYWHERE, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw." (Verses 4-5,13). After he taught the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza (*Acts 8:26-39*) "Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel IN ALL THE TOWNS until he reached Caesarea." (Verse 40).

The Aid to Bible Understanding has this to say:

Philip: A first-century EVANGELIST and MISSIONARY... The account of Philip's activity... confirms the high spiritual quality of the men forming this chosen administrative body [seven deacons], for Philip DID A WORK SIMILAR TO THAT LATER EFFECTED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL, though more limited in scope...Philip went to Samaria and there DECLARED THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM and, with the miraculous power of the holy spirit, cast out demons and cured the paralyzed and lame...Philip was then led by Jehovah's spirit to meet the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza...From there he made his way to Ashdod and on to Caesarea, "declaring the good news to ALL THE CITIES" along the way. (*Acts 8:39,40*) THESE BRIEF ACCOUNTS ILLUSTRATE THE WORK OF AN "EVANGELIZER." -- PAGE 1303.

Similarly, Timothy's life shows that he too was being trained as an EVANGELIST to carry on after Paul's death.

The Aid to Bible Understanding notes:

...the older men of the congregation joined the apostle Paul in laying their hands upon Timothy, thereby setting him apart for a PARTICULAR SERVICE in connection with the Christian congregation. (I Tim.1:18;

4:14; II Tim.1:6; compare Acts 13:3) Paul chose Timothy as a traveling companion...With Paul, Timothy shared in Christian activities in Philippi, Thessalonica and Beroea...During Paul's third missionary journey (c.52-56 C.E.) Timothy again traveled with the apostle...Later, at the time Paul wrote to the Romans, apparently from Corinth (the home of Gaius), Timothy was with him. Compare Romans 16:21, 23; I Cor.1:14. Timothy's name is included in the salutation of letters written by Paul to the Philippians (1:1), Colosians (1:1) and Philemon (1) during the apostle's first imprisonment at Rome...After Paul's release from prison, Timothy again shared with the apostle in the ministry, remaining in Ephesus at his direction. (I Tim.1:13) At this time (c. 61-64) Timothy may have been in his thirties and had AUTHORITY IN THE APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS in the congregation. -- Page 1602, Article "Timothy."

This confirms that the early evangelists were trained by the apostles to REPLACE THEM in the role of making "disciples of all nations" AFTER THE APOSTLES' DEATH.

THE EVANGELISTS CARRIED ON THE ROLE OF TAKING THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD TO ALL NATIONS, JUST AS THE PROPHETS CARRIED ON THE ROLE OF INFUSING NEW TRUTH INTO THE CHURCH OF GOD!!

In the *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr. Armstrong claims that:

Evangelists were leading ministers, proclaiming the gospel to the public, even raising up local churches and having supervision over some churches under the apostle. Therefore

an evangelist may hold executive functions under the apostle in the Church headquarters or work today. An evangelist is not necessarily stationary. (Page 245).

I am not quite sure what Mr. Armstrong means by "leading minister" in this passage. I suspect, however, that Mr. Armstrong is alluding to the orderly advancement through the ranks of a HIERARCHICAL SYSTEM to the rank of evangelist -- hence an evangelist would be a "leading minister."

We find that Philip the EVANGELIST was one of the seven deacons mentioned in *Acts 6*; therefore there is no reason why an evangelist should not be ordained from this office or responsibility, or any other for that matter.

MR. ARMSTRONG'S STATEMENT PRESUPPOSES A HIERARCHICAL FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT WHICH WE HAVE PROVEN TO BE NONEXISTENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH!

As far as an evangelist "having supervision over some churches under the apostle," this would amount to being "an OCCASIONAL REFEREE...who acts only in case of special need." (The *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings.) Evangelists, like apostles, did not share in the ordinary administration of the local churches -- this was left up to the OVERSEERS.

Mr. Armstrong's belief that "an evangelist may hold executive functions under the

apostle in the Church headquarters or work today" hardly bears consideration. Since we have plainly seen that the office of apostle is no longer extant, this so-called responsibility of an evangelist at "headquarters" is simply NONEXISTENT!

Mr. Armstrong's last sentence -- "An evangelist is not necessarily stationary" -- should be rephrased! An evangelist was very RARELY stationary -- he

These verses plainly reveal that pastors (shepherds), elders and overseers are identical and fulfill the SAME ROLE or function in the local churches.

was CONSTANTLY on the move planting the "seed" for those coming up behind to "water" -- JUST LIKE THE APOSTLES.

The evangelists were, in fact, apostles who had NOT been directly chosen by, worked with, witnessed the death of, and personally observed the resurrection of, Christ. They preached the word, communicated the facts of the gospel, and paved the way for the more systematic work of the PASTORS AND TEACHERS who watched over and fed the churches when founded.

Pastors and Teachers

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, AND SOME TO BE PASTORS AND TEACHERS, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith

and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...(*Ephesians 4:11-13*).

With this last classification in the list of *Ephesians 4*, we are getting down to the actual organized government in God's Church -- that of the LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL.

The word "PASTORS" in the above passage come from the Greek word POIMEN, which means "shepherd, superintendent." In the New Testament this word "pastor" is linked with two other words that mean EXACTLY the same thing:

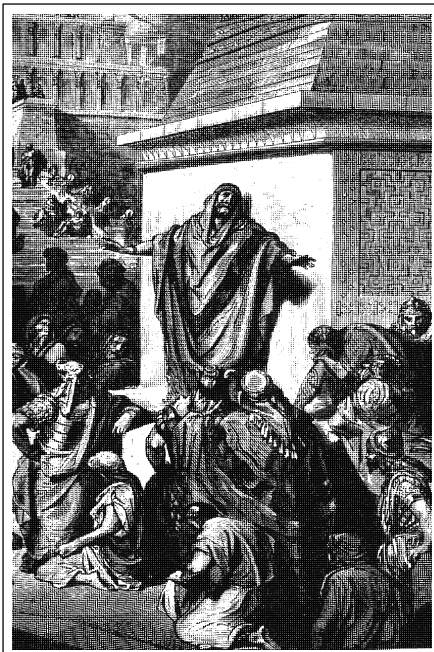
To the ELDERS among you, I appeal as a fellow ELDER, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be SHEPHERDS of God's flock that is under your care, serving as OVERSEERS -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the FLOCK. -- *1 Peter 5:1*.

These same words are linked together in *Acts 20:16*, where Luke writes:

Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible by the day of Pentecost. From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus for the ELDERS of the church. When they arrived he said to them;...Keep watch over yourselves and ALL THE FLOCK of which the Holy Spirit has made you OVERSEERS. Be SHEPHERDS of the church of God, which he has bought with his own blood.

The original Greek couples "pastors" and "teachers" together -- making NO DISTINCTION between the two; so therefore "teachers" are NOT a separate function or role within the Church.

The Prophet Jonah



We find, in *Titus 1:5-7*, that two of these words are linked together:

An ELDER must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an OVERSEER is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless...

These verses plainly reveal that pastors (shepherds), elders and overseers are identical and fulfill the SAME ROLE or function in the local churches.

In the book *Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern*, by Ralph Woodrow, we read on page 112:

Paul instructed Titus to "ordain ELDERS in every city" (Titus 1:5), and then went on to speak of these elders as bishops (verse 7). When Paul instructed "the ELDERS" of Ephesus, he said: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS (bishops), to FEED (PASTOR) the church of God" (Acts 20:17, 28). The word translated "overseers" is the same word that is elsewhere translated bishops. The word "feed" means the same as the word translated pastor. THESE MINISTERS WERE REFERRED TO AS ELDERS, BISHOPS, OVERSEERS, AND PASTORS -- ALL OF THESE EXPRESSIONS REFERRING TO EXACTLY THE SAME OFFICE.

This is quite plain, isn't it?

Laying this out in chart form we have the following:

SAME FUNCTION

Presbuteros ----- Elder (Older

Man)

Episkopos ----- Overseer

Poimen ----- Shepherd (Pastor)

We have already seen that PASTOR (Gr. POIMEN) is defined as "shepherd, superintendent." OVERSEER (Gr. EPIS- KOPOS) is defined as "a superintendent, an overseer, an inspector; a bishop or overseer of the Christian Church." The word ELDER (OLDER MAN -- Gr. PRESBUTEROS) means "an old man, an elder, a presbyter or priest."

Putting all these definitions together we can see that the man filling this office is an ELDER -- "old man" in the faith -- who is a SHEPHERD, superintendent, or OVERSEER of God's Church.

Under the name "Older man" (elder) the *Aid to Bible Understanding* has this to say:

As in fleshly Israel, so in spiritual Israel the "older men" were those responsible for the direction of the congregation...in a few texts the "older men" are called e.pisko.poi or "OVERSEERS" ("bishops," AV)...Over and above one's having attained spiritual maturity, the ability to teach, to exhort and to reprove clearly played a major part in one's being accredited as an "older man" in the congregation. (I Tim.3:2; Titus 1:9) As "shepherds," the "older men" would be principally responsible for the spiritual feeding of the flock, as well as for caring for those spiritually ill and for protecting the flock against invasion by wolfish elements. -- Acts 20:28-35; Jas. 5:14,15; 1 Peter 5:24....Even as each city in Israel had its "older men" who guided and

judged, so each city-congregation of spiritual Israel had its body of "older men" or "overseers," these regularly being mentioned in the PLURAL, as at Jerusalem,...at Ephesus,...at Philippi, ...and with regard to the "laying of hands" on Timothy...Nothing is said of any term or period being assigned to the holding of the position of "older man." Since the appointment was an acknowledgment of the person's spiritual qualifications, it would appear that the "older men" continued to be accredited as such as long as they did not prove unfaithful.

The same book has quite a bit of information about the next name -- OVERSEER:

The Christian "overseers" (e.pisko.poi) corresponds to those recognized as the "OLDER MEN" (pre.sbyte.roi) of the congregation. That BOTH of these are designations of the SAME position in the congregation can be seen from the instance of Paul's calling the "older men of the congregation" of Ephesus to Miletus to meet with him there. In exhorting these "older men," he states: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you OVERSEERS [form of e.pisko.poil, to SHEPHERD the congregation of God." (Acts 20:17-28) The apostle further makes clear this identity in writing to Titus. He here speaks of Titus' making appointment of "older men in city after city" and, in evident reference to such ones, he goes on to describe their qualifications but uses the term "OVERSEER" (e.pisko.pos) in doing so, as he also does in setting forth similar requirements when writing Timothy. -- Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7. "OLDER MAN" (pre.sbyte.ros) is the more basic (and far more frequent) designation for those appointed to EXERCISE CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTION, while "overseer" (e.pisko.pos) describes a FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY THIS POSITION ENTAILS.

The *Aid to Bible Understanding* continues:

Hence, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Vol.I, pp.128,129) comments: "Presbuteros, an ELDER, is another term for the same person as bishop or OVERSEER... The term 'elder' [older man] indicates the MATURE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING of those so described; the term 'bishop,' or 'OVERSEER,' indicates the CHARACTER OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN." The earlier-mentioned work edited by G. Kittel says: "They

After reading these verses there can be NO ARGUMENT whatsoever concerning the PLURALITY of overseers in each local congregation

are ELDERS IN STATUS (not in virtue of their age but in virtue of their position and accreditation), and they are BISHOPS [OVERSEERS] IN RESPONSIBILITY." -- Vol.II, p.616...The fact that these overseers or older men are also described as 'SHEPHERDS of the flock of God,' and 'God's stewards' ELIMINATES any thought of rule or authority like that exercised by kings, lords or masters (owners or employers)...WHAT AUTHORITY THE CONGREGATIONAL OVERSEERS HAD was for the spiritual upbuilding of the brothers and the protection of the congregation's purity...A consideration of the Christian Greek Scriptures indicates that the OVERSEERS OR OLDER MEN IN ANY ONE CONGREGATION WERE OF EQUAL AUTHORITY. It may be noted that, in his congregational letters, Paul does not single out ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL as THE overseer, nor are these letters addressed to any individual as such.

The last of the three names -- SHEPHERD, PASTOR -- is pictured in the following passage: "Jehovah is a Shepherd who lovingly cares for his sheep, that is, his people...His Son Jesus Christ is the 'great shepherd' (Heb.13:20) and the 'chief shepherd,' UNDER WHOSE DIRECTION THE

OVERSEERS IN CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD..."(*Aid to Bible Understanding*, Article "Shepherd," page 1489)

In *Ephesians 4:11* you will notice that the word "TEACHERS" is connected to that of "pastors." The *Aid to Bible Understanding* expounds author- itatively:

The position of TEACHERS was of such importance that it is listed third, right after apostles and prophets, in the placement of members in the congregation (1 Cor.12:28). It was NOT a position FILLED BY CHRISTIANS GENERALLY (1 Cor.12:29) and never by women. Wrote the apostle Paul: "I do not permit a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12). OVERSEERS OR OLDER MEN APPOINTED TO THEIR POSITIONS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT SERVED IN THIS CAPACITY.

A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings, points this out:

Further, it [teacher] is also known by the name of 'pastor'; for the arrangement of the clauses ('and some' introducing each class) shows that the 'teachers' and the 'pastors' ARE THE SAME PERSONS. The distinction of the teacher from the evangelist is SIGNIFICANT, suggesting the differentiation of function in which THE EVANGELIST PREACHES, declaring the gospel, and THE TEACHER INSTRUCTS the converts. The COMPANION TITLE 'pastor' points to a settled ministry within the Church as distinct from the TRAVELING MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS... (Vol.I, T.& T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1951. Page 691).

Poimen ----- Shepherd
(Pastor)

Didaskalos ----- Teacher

To avoid confusion, let's pick one of these four words -- OVERSEER -- and use it from now on when we refer to this category of local Church government.

The next question to ask, and a very important one at that, is: How many OVERSEERS were there in each local Church congregation? Let Ralph Woodrow, in his book *Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern*, answer this:

In the New Testament, the full work of a church was NOT PLACED ON ONE INDIVIDUAL. Churches were commonly pastored by a PLURALITY of elders [overseers] (plural) in every church" (Acts 14:19-23) and in "every city" (Titus 1:5). Expressions such as "the ELDERS (plural) of the church" are commonly used (Acts 20:17; James 5:14). -- Page 113.

Let us go through all the verses in the *New Testament*, including the ones quoted by Mr. Woodrow, that show the PLURALITY of overseers in the local congregations:

ACTS 14:23: Paul and Barnabas appointed ELDERS [plural] for them in EACH CHURCH and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

PHILIPPIANS 1:1: ...To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the

Mr. Armstrong, in the *Mystery of the Ages*, makes a distinction BETWEEN pastor and teacher: "Pastors are stationary pastors over a local church or contingent group of local churches. THEN (emphasis mine) there were placed in the Church TEACHERS -- not necessarily preachers." We have just seen, however, that this distinction is NOT implied in *Ephesians 4:11*. The original Greek couples "pastors" and "teachers" together -- making NO DISTINCTION between the two; so therefore "teachers" are not a SEPARATE function or role within the Church.

The Interpreter's Bible, published by Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1953, sums this up well:

The PASTORS and TEACHERS are mentioned in a way that sets them apart from the former three categories; the form of the phrase might be taken to mean that THESE ARE DUAL TITLES FOR A SINGLE OFFICE -- reflecting the TWOFOLD TASK of the settled ministry, with its duties of pastoral care and INSTRUCTION..." -- Page 691.

Now that we have clearly defined and analyzed the different names and roles for a local Church pastor, let us rewrite the chart adding the responsibility of "teacher" to it:

SAME FUNCTION OR OFFICE

Presbuteros ----- Elder (Older Man)

Episkopos ----- Overseer

BEHOLD, I WILL SEND YOU ELIJAH

THE PROPHET--

TRUMPET PROPHECIC MINISTRIES (CHURCH OF GOD) * ALTADENA * CALIFORNIA * USA

Who are the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11? Are they somehow connected with the Elijah that come? What about Elzaha? Is Zechariah 4 a prophecy of the Philadelphia Church now being formed? What about the two olive trees? You also need to know about the "Synagogue of Satan" and its relationship to the Philadelphia Church!

John D. Keyser

In the *Book of Malachi* -- the last one of the Old Testament -- we read the following INJUNCTION and PROMISE to the modern nations of Israel:

Remember the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. **BEHOLD, I WILL SEND YOU ELIJAH THE PROPHET BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD.** And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. -- 4:4-6.

Malachi's prophecies ended with the statement, "REMEMBER THE LAW OF MOSES, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel." IT IS THIS VERY THING [THE LAW] THAT GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE FORGOTTEN!

This prophet, who is coming in the SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH, will accomplish the

task of turning many in the modern nations of Israel back to OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS God gave Moses. This will be our last chance to repent before God's curses (as outlined in *Deuteronomy 32* and *Leviticus 26*) come to pass. Many will repent, but as a whole, our nations will remain STIFF-NECKED AND DISOBEDIENT. The curses of the law will then descend upon us!

God, in His mercy, is going to send a prophet to WARN the people and turn them back to the Eternal before He sends His judgments upon this earth. "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" can best be understood from the statement Jesus made (*Matt. 18:3-4*) that all men must become as little children before they can enter the Kingdom of God. This coming Elijah will preach REPENTANCE and turn

many back to God. These children's hearts will be turned to their fathers -- ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB!

The man whom God is sending will have the spirit of Elijah. John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy for Judah, and prepared a people to receive the Messiah at His first coming. The prophet yet to come in the spirit of Elijah will witness to ALL ISRAEL -- the United Kingdom, U.S., and the democracies of Northwestern Europe -- before the Messiah returns. A GREAT MANY PEOPLE will come into the truth during the end-time tribulation (*Rev. 7:9*), and will be victorious over the beast and the false prophet.

The Nature of Elijah's Ministry

Elijah was a prophet sent to the northern kingdom of Israel

Article -- Behold, I Will Send You Elijah the Prophet --

In Ephesians 1:22 Paul likens God's Church to the HUMAN BODY...therefore, wouldn't it be logical to have the HANDS represent TWO OVERSEERS who take care of and SHEPHERD each local congregation?

OVERSEERS [plural] and deacons....

I TIMOTHY 5:17: The ELDERS [plural] who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

TITUS 1:5: The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint ELDERS [plural] in every town, as I directed you.

I PETER 5:1: To the ELDERS [plural] among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

ACTS 20:17: From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the ELDERS [plural] of the church.

ACTS 21:17: When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and ALL THE ELDERS were present.

ACTS 11:29: The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gifts to the ELDERS [plural] by Barnabas and Saul.

ACTS 15:22: Then the apostles and ELDERS [plural], with the whole church [in Jerusalem], decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

After reading these verses there can be NO ARGUMENT whatsoever concerning the PLURALITY of overseers in each local congregation!

The next question to ask -- and one that bears on Church history -- is this: Did these overseers SHARE responsibility, or did ONE assume the role of overall authority for the local congregation? The *Aid to Bible Understanding* answers this

And where would the "deacons" fit in the analogy of the human body mentioned by Paul? In the FEET of course!

question:

A consideration of the Christian Greek Scriptures indicates that the OVERSEERS or older men in any one congregation WERE OF EQUAL AUTHORITY. It may be noted that, in his congregational letters, Paul DOES NOT SINGLE OUT ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL as THE overseer, nor are these letters addressed to any INDIVIDUAL as such. -- Article "Overseer," page 1261.

Did you notice that -- "nor are these letters addressed to any individual as such?" Does the *Bible* uphold this statement? Indeed it does! In *Romans 1:7* Paul addresses the local Church in Rome: "To ALL IN ROME who are loved by God and called to be saints." In *Ephesians 1:1* Paul handles it this way: "To the SAINTS in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus." And again, in *Colossians 1:2*: "To the holy and faithful BROTHERS in Christ at Colosse."

I think it is worth noting that Paul is BEING VERY CAREFUL not to address his letters to one individual in each local Church, thereby trying to prevent the situation which the apostle John faced in *III John 9*: "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, WHO LOVES TO BE FIRST, will have nothing to do with us." Here we see an OVERSEER trying to take all the authority to himself and DIVIDE the local congregation.

This is a problem that occurred more frequently as the years slipped by until a SINGLE LEADER OR BISHOP started to rule the local congregations in a MONARCHICAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

Notice what the *Aid to Bible Understanding* has to say about this development:

Whatever the way in which it developed, history shows that the position of OVERSEER (e.pisko.pos) did eventually come to reside in ONE INDIVIDUAL IN EACH CONGREGATION with a resultant CONCENTRATION OF AUTHORITY. In time such overseers even extended their control beyond their city to surrounding regions, forming a "diocese." The TRUE SENSE of the term e.pisko.pos and the SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLE were lost from view and the designation "bishop" took on a PERVERTED SENSE, becoming the title of men who 'LORDED IT OVER THE FLOCK'...Historical data as found in the writings of early Christians COINCIDES with the picture found in the Christian Greek Scriptures...Thus, after pointing out that there is "NO TRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF GOVERNMENT BY A SINGLE BISHOP"...Douglas' New Bible Dictionary says: "Among the Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius (of the first and

The laws and commandments, and the truth of God -- along with knowledge of events to come -- were infused into the early Church by the apostles AND PROPHETS!

second centuries C.E.) is the ONLY ONE who insists on MONARCHICAL EPISCOPACY, and even he NEVER states that this is of divine institution -- an argument which would have been decisive, if it had been available for him to use." Jerome (of the fourth century) is quoted as saying that the SUPREMACY OF A SINGLE BISHOP (e.pisko.pos) came about 'by custom rather than by the Lord's actual appointment'...

Having proved the PLURALITY of overseers in a local congregation, let's ask the next logical question -- HOW MANY overseers were there in each congregation? We can find a clue to this by going to **Mark 6:7**: "Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out TWO BY TWO and gave them authority over evil spirits." This principle is also mentioned in **Luke 10:1**: "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them TWO BY TWO ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go." If we couple this to **John 8:17** we see that a definite number begins to emerge: "In your own Law it is written that the testimony of TWO MEN is valid."

Now, consider this for a moment: In **Ephesians 1:22** Paul likens God's Church to the HUMAN BODY, Christ being the HEAD and the brethren in Christ the BODY; therefore, wouldn't it be logical to have the HANDS represent TWO OVERSEERS who take care of and SHEPHERD each local congregation? I believe this becomes evident when we study the TWO WITNESSES of **Revelation 11**. It can

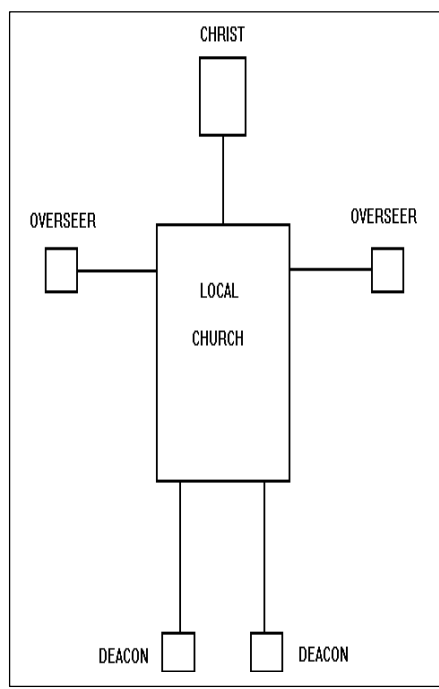
be proven (see my article -- **Behold, I will Send You Elijah the Prophet**) that the two witnesses are leaders or OVERSEERS of a Philadelphia congregation. Therefore, putting all this information together, it becomes readily apparent that EACH LOCAL CONGREGATION OR CHURCH HAS TWO OVERSEERS!

The fourth chapter of **Zechariah** corroborates the DUALITY of overseers in God's Church. Here we see the golden lampstand -- representing the Church -- receiving the spirit of God from the TWO OLIVE TREES who "represent the two anointed ones who assist the Lord of all the earth."

Also consider for a moment the case of Diotrephes again: Here is a man "who loves to be first." If there were more than two overseers in each congregation -- say six -- it would be difficult for one overseer to gain the ascendancy without being prevented by the other overseers. Whereas, with two overseers, one could take all the authority and, if he had a large enough following, the other overseer would be powerless to do anything about it. This is how, in the early centuries of God's Church, men began to usurp power and authority at the local Church level, thus forming the MONARCHICAL or "bishop-based" system that has come down to us through apostate churches.

Now that we have covered all the categories or offices in **Ephesians 4:11**, there is one

The "Body" of Christ



more to discuss -- that of DEACON.

Deacons

Philippians 1:1 states thus:

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and DEACONS:

Here we see introduced ANOTHER category or office -- one not listed in *Ephesians 4:11* or *I Corinthians 12:28*.

The word deacon comes from the Greek "diakonos," meaning: a servant, a minister, a DEACON or MINISTER appointed in the primitive Church to PROVIDE FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POORER BRETHREN. (*A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, by John Dawson).

The *Aid to Bible Understanding*, on page 1260, asserts the following:

In addition to the overseers or older men, ONE OTHER GROUP is particularly indicated in the structure of the Christian congregation, that of the di.a'ko.noi or MINISTERIAL SERVANTS ("DEACONS," AV)...A notable difference in the requirements for overseers or "older men" as compared with the MINISTERIAL SERVANTS is in the qualifications of teaching, ability to exhort and reprove, required ONLY of the overseers...Those serving as "ministerial servants" cared for other necessary congregation matters and duties NOT REQUIRING the same extent of Scriptural knowledge, understanding, judgment, and ability to teach, necessary for the position of overseer or "older man."

Conybeare and Howson, in their book *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, make these comments: "The office [of deacon] seems to have existed from the first in the Church of Jerusalem (see Acts 5:6,10); those who discharged its duties were then called the "young men," in contradistinction to the presbyters or "ELDERS"; and it was their duty to ASSIST THE LATTER by discharging the MECHANICAL SERVICES required for the well-being of the Christian community." (Page 341).

The role of DEACON is becoming manifest. They are the ones who take care of the PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS of the congregation -- the ones who pick up the elderly and take them to services; the ones who visit the sick; the ones who take meals to the poor; the ones who put chairs out for services.

And where would the "deacons" fit in the analogy of the human body mentioned by Paul? In the FEET of course!

That there are MORE THAN ONE deacon in each local Church is evidenced by *Philippians 1:1*: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and DEACONS [plural]:"

Also, the *New Testament* indicates that the office of DEACON can be held by a WOMAN: "I commend to you our SISTER Phoebe, a servant [di.a'ko.nos] of the church in Cenchrea." (*Romans 16:1*).

So it becomes evident that there is a PLURALITY of deacons -- as with elders -- and if the analogy of the human body holds true, there are TWO DEACONS in each local Church, represented by the FEET. *Acts 6* does show, however, that MORE deacons can be chosen, on a temporary basis, to take care of a pressing need within the Church.

For the Edification of the Body of Christ

We have now covered ALL the offices that God placed in His New Testament Church, and have seen how they fit together to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey EVERYTHING I have commanded you." (*Matthew 28:19*).

The laws and commandments, and truth of God (along with knowledge of events to come), were infused into the early Church by the APOSTLES and PROPHETS. When the apostles passed from the scene, the PROPHETS became the sole source of new truth and understanding.

The EVANGELISTS, like the apostles before them, were given the role of carrying the gospel to the nations of the world. When they PLANTED the seed, the OVERSEERS took over the job of WATERING the local congregations with the help and love of the DEACONS.

These SERVANTS OF GOD are to be respected and looked up to with Christian love, but NEVER idolized or put in place of God. "Now we ask you, brothers, to RESPECT those who work hard among you, who are OVER YOU IN THE LORD and who ADMONISH you. Hold them in the HIGHEST REGARD IN LOVE because of THEIR WORK." (*I Thess.5:12-13*).

Paul further asks, in *Hebrews 13:17*: "OBEY your lead-

ers and SUBMIT to their authority. They keep watch over you as MEN WHO MUST GIVE ACCOUNT. Obey them so that their work will be a JOY, not a burden, for that would be of NO ADVANTAGE to you."

Of the OVERSEERS in each local Church, Paul says: "The elders who direct the affairs of the church WELL are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

We must honor and respect those God has given the role of guiding and building up His Church in this end time, remembering, with ALL WISDOM, to NEVER place them on a pedestal or throne in PLACE OF GOD -- as a HIERARCHICAL form of government tends to do.

After all, these men -- and women -- have been provided by God for the EDIFICATION of the body of Christ!

THE FOUR CHURCHES OF REVELATION!

The Worldwide Church of God claims that it is the only true church on the face of the earth today! Is that correct or just pompous posturing? Is the key to the vision John saw in Revelation 2:18 found in Daniel 10? What does "the hour of trial" have in common with "gold refined in the fire? Who is Shebna, and what role does he play in the change of leadership that occurred in the Philadelphian Church?

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