

HWA Letter on Church Government

By Herbert W. Armstrong
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Dear Brethren of God's Church:

It is vital that you read carefully every word of this letter.

Do you know where we are right now, IN PROPHECY? We are in the very time of Daniel's prophecy: At "the time of the end, many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:9-10).

God's people are in the time of final trying and testing -- like taking final exams to determine whether we graduate.

Today some in the Church of God do not UNDERSTAND just what the Church of God really IS! Some have become confused as to whether there is ORGANIZATION or government in it -- and I mean in GOD'S OWN CHURCH! And God HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH! (I Cor. 12:12, 13.) But we of "the wise" shall understand! That understanding shall be made PLAIN in this letter.

Some wonder whether they can leave God's Church, and still be true and real Christians -- whether they could then enter GOD'S KINGDOM with His GIFT of ETERNAL LIFE. I will answer that in this letter.

We are also in the time of JESUS' prophecy: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, SAYING I (Jesus) am Christ; and shall deceive many. ... But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. ... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:4-5, 13-14, 24).

Also it seems highly possible we are entering the very beginning of John's prophecy of Revelation 12:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (Satan); and the dragon fought and his angels (demons), and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: ... Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (Church)..." (Rev. 12:7-13).

Also, just as the Apostle Paul foretold, speaking at Miletus to the elders (ministers) of the Church at Ephesus, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, also of your own selves (ministers in God's Church), shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). This happened then. It has happened NOW!

Many times I have told you, dear Brethren, that when God first called me, beginning in the autumn of 1926, that the living Christ brought me into His truth a step at a time. YOU have not had to learn the truth so slowly -- Christ used me to do it for you. And one of the very last truths He opened to me was that of CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT! There was a reason for this.

For some years I worked in cooperation with the Church of God we have come to regard as the "Sardis era" (Rev. 3:1-5). When I first came in contact with them, starting 1926-27, their headquarters was at Stanberry, Missouri. They operated under a General Conference type of organization. Early in my acquaintance with them, their head man had refused to correct admitted error, or to accept an important and admitted truth. Partly for this reason I never joined them -- never became one of their members. I had learned in my earliest study of the Bible that GOD'S Church would be keeping the Commandments, including the Sabbath, would be kept in the name of GOD, and have Biblical TRUTH. Several religious organizations had the name Church of GOD. But this seemed to be the only one keeping the Sabbath. While they certainly did not have all Biblical truth, they did, beyond question, have more than any church I knew, and less error. So I did continue to fellowship with them. I finally preached my first sermon, probably midsummer, 1928, in an old former country store building at Dever, near Jefferson, in Oregon.

In the autumn of 1930 -- probably late autumn -- the members in the Willamette Valley of Oregon split, and one group incorporated as the "Oregon Conference of The Church of God." I was ordained by this Conference in June, 1931. I was employed by them as a minister, holding six-nights-a-week evangelistic meetings on a salary of \$20 per week. But the salary was dropped at the end of November, when their treasury went dry. This was in the depth of the Great Depression. In February, 1933, there was enough money in their treasury to pay me \$3 per week, with farmer members supplying vegetables, etc.

I want to give you a brief synopsis of my association with the "Sardis" church for two reasons: 1) So you may understand why I was not led to the full understanding about church organization and government until after the founding of Ambassador College, and because defecting ministers have been giving out the FALSE idea that they are now doing only what I did then. That claim is 100% FALSE.

At some time between December, 1931, and the summer of 1933, a big split had occurred in the whole Church. The President and leader of the Church at Stanberry had been outvoted from the Presidency by one vote. He had then combined with a leading member at Salem, West Virginia, to form what they called "The Reorganization of the Church" with "The Bible Form of Organization." This consisted of a totally misapplied form of what they termed "the Twelve, the Seventy, and the Seven."

The "Oregon Conference" went in with this Salem, West Virginia Church. In August, 1933, I completely gave up the \$3 per week salary from the "Oregon Conference." One week later, the PARENT "PHILADELPHIA ERA" Church was raised up, with 19 members, resulting from six weeks of six nights a week meetings I had held at the one-room country schoolhouse eight miles west of Eugene, Oregon. This Church consisted of four or five former California members, and the rest were all my own new converts. I then continued holding services six-nights-a-week at a larger school- house at Alvadore, some 15 miles northwest of Eugene, adding fifteen new members. By April of 1934 -- after the broadcast (January 6, 1934) and The PLAIN TRUTH (February, 1934) had started -- the Church at Eugene, following the "Oregon Conference," decided to cooperate with (but not as members of) the Salem, West Virginia Church. They claimed world headquarters at Jerusalem, where there were no members, so far as I knew. But their active headquarters was Salem, West Virginia. By now, April, 1934, the WORK OF GOD, which was started in January, 1934, by the EUGENE Church raised up by me was well under way. That is, before we even began this cooperative fellowship with the Salem organization, we became incorporated as The Church of God at Eugene, Oregon. The Salem organization counted me as one of "the Seventy" leading elders.

I worked with them, in cooperation. I even went so far in cooperation as to send in regular ministerial reports to Salem, even as their ministers did.

But I was not a member of this Salem organization, nor did they pay me any salary. The only organization I was a member of was The Church of God at Eugene, Oregon. Later we incorporated as The Radio Church of God. We had started VERY small -- 19 members. The members paid their tithes direct to me, and I paid radio bills, and "publishing" costs (mimeograph). We in the WORK and Church of the "Philadelphia era" were not yet large enough to be organized ourselves. That is one reason I did not learn till later God's teaching on church organization.

Meanwhile, I continued to act as pastor of the "Sardis" church at Jefferson. Let me make clear the way finances were then handled. As I said, our own members handed their tithes to me. Most members at Jefferson did the same, as individuals, though some sent their tithes to Salem. I received NO salary or remuneration of any kind from either the Salem or Stanberry organization. Nor, so far as I remember, from any "Sardis" members other than those I served as their minister, preaching every Sabbath.

One dissenter, disfellowshipped at Pasadena, I am told, is claiming I misrepresented in saying I never received remuneration or salary from either the Stanberry or Salem organization. He claims he can produce a cancelled check proving this false. Any cancelled checks he may have heard of would be from one of these individual members, and were given me to use in the VERY SAME WORK OF GOD in which the living Christ is STILL using me.

For some years after beginning cooperation with the Salem organization in April, 1934, we of the Eugene Church continued in fellowship and cooperation with the Salem organization -- and even when occasion offered, with Stanberry members in Oregon. Remember, the PARENT Church of what has become the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD was started west of Eugene, Oregon, in August 1933. Gradually, the Work -- primarily by radio and printing -- grew (30% a year for nearly 35 years), and as it did I found I had less and less time to minister to the "Sardis" brethren at Jefferson. In due time, I invited one of their ministers, Roy Dailey, to share that church every other Sabbath with me, and finally as our WORK grew and absorbed ALL my time, I simply stopped preaching at Jefferson.

But the story that I WENT OUT FROM THEM to start a "work of my own" because their head man rejected a truth, or refused to accept a truth, IS 100% FALSE! I was NEVER EVEN A MEMBER of them. I cooperated with them, and I was always LOYAL, in that cooperation. I was NOT ONE OF THEIR CONVERTS -- I WAS NEVER THEIR SON IN THE LORD, as these dissenters are my "sons in the Lord." THEY have defected and GONE OUT -- but I NEVER DID!

No minister on earth can take credit in any manner in my conversion. God was calling me! The living Christ taught me, even as He directly called, converted, and taught, the Apostle Paul, teaching me with the WRITTEN WORD, even as He taught Paul Himself as the PERSONAL word.

At NO time did I fight against the "Sardis" people, or seek to pull any of their brethren away from them, or from those through whom God had originally called and converted them. This I NEVER DID. This these dissenters ARE DOING, and there is NO PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT where Jesus Christ approves such a thing. I NEVER proselyted. From the first, I merely preached the Gospel, and Christ gave me NEW converts. I went to the world with the Gospel. The dissenting ministers are going to the Church to proselyte and draw members after them.

These dissenters apparently are making NO EFFORT to spread the Gospel in any way. Their sole aim appears to be to falsely ACCUSE (Satan is the accuser of the brethren), to deceive, to harm or DESTROY the Work of the living GOD, and to DRAW DISCIPLES AFTER THEM! Never have I remotely resorted to such heinous, abominable, unChristian conduct. They are GUILTY of the very things which they falsely accuse. What they are doing is negative, satanic, diabolical. Actually it is NOT "they" -- but Satan diabolically deceiving and using them -- and a deceived person may be sincere.

Brethren, I have felt it necessary that you should know and understand these things, so you may realize WHY I did not yet fully understand the truth regarding church government and organization, in February, 1939 -- MORE THAN 35 YEARS AGO -- when I wrote an article on church organization.

There had been much confusion and argument among the "Sardis" brethren about church organization. When the new so-called "Bible Form of Church Organization" was introduced at Salem, naturally the Stanberry people argued against it. I think we all became confused on the question. It's like being too close to one tree to see the forest. I KNEW that the so-called "12, the 70, and the 7" was entirely misapplied, and definitely NOT God's form of organization. But also I knew that the "General Conference" form was not Biblical. In both of those -- Stanberry and Salem -- the people voted -- government from the bottom like these dissenters today.

For this reason I did write an article more than 35 years ago, in the February, 1939, GOOD NEWS -- WHICH WENT TO OUR OWN "Philadelphia Era" MEMBERS -- NOT to the Salem or Stanberry membership -- intended to PROTECT OUR OWN MEMBERS WHO WERE MY OWN CONVERTS, AND NOT TO CONFUSE OR TAKE MEMBERS FROM EITHER OF THEM -- proving that this so-called "Bible Form of Organization" was NOT Biblical.

By that time our own churches, and the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD were operating separately from either of them. But I had not, as yet, come to understand WHAT IS the true Bible form of church organization. When the true knowledge was revealed, LATER, to those of us in the "Philadelphia Era" we put it into practice and PUBLISHED THIS TRUTH.

Brethren, do you realize THIS IS THE ONLY CHURCH on earth, so far as I know, which has consistently GROWN in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18) as God commands. We GREW into the TRUE knowledge regarding church organization and government.

We published an article revealing new truth about church organization in The GOOD NEWS, November, 1952, and again in August, 1953, "GOVERNMENT in Our Church," and in November, 1953, "JUDGING and DISCIPLINE in God's Church." As God revealed truth, His Church accepted it. And long since, we came into the FULL TRUTH on church organization and government.

We may not have ALL truth on ALL subjects even yet, I suppose -- though if we KNEW of any truth we do not have, we would have accepted it! But, to constantly check what we do hold, and research for any possible NEW truth, we do have, at Pasadena Headquarters, an EIGHT-MAN team of scholars and researchers, CONSTANTLY RESEARCHING critical doctrinal questions, and reporting their findings and recommendations to Garner Ted Armstrong and myself for final decision. IN MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS there is safety (Proverbs 11:14).

Yes, far more safety than in ONE single scholar of Biblical research, who is subject to MUCH error!

So when that article of 35 years ago, written while we were slowly growing into the true knowledge of the subject of church organization, is quoted to you, just REALIZE that it is PROOF God's true Church DOES correct error, and does GROW In truth, AS REVEALED.

Now I want to make SO CLEAR there can be no misunderstanding, the answer to the questions at the beginning of this letter. To make it CRYSTAL CLEAR, we must begin at the beginning.

First, then, I have to ask once again -- and GET IT CLEARLY IN MIND -- WHY WERE YOU BORN? WHY did God create HUMANS? Why, once again, did God call you and me NOW, instead of LATER? This is NOT the time when God is trying to SAVE the world spiritually. The Day of Pentecost shows we are now merely the "first fruits" -- the very small first harvest of human souls.

Too many of us have been getting our eyes OFF the main GOAL -- OF God's PURPOSE for us in our time, NOW. In order to DESTROY GOD'S WORK -- to get our eyes off it -- false "ISSUES" have been raised -- QUESTIONS designed to cause DOUBTS in your minds, to destroy FAITH -- have been raised. Subtle, clever, deceptive methods have been used to detract us from and cause us to neglect God's REAL PURPOSE for us today! We must immediately get back to THAT PURPOSE!

Brethren, YOU, each, as an individual, were born for the most COLOSSAL, the most TRANSCENDENT purpose our minds could conceive! Let me remind you of it! Let's get our minds focused on the MAIN GOAL!

In Hebrews 1: God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things (Moffatt translation, the UNIVERSE), ..." (Verse 2). And God has made us JOINT-HEIRS with Christ (Romans 8:17).

WHY should the Mighty GOD be concerned about US, Brethren? Listen!

"Thou (God) crownedst him (each of YOU) with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put ALL THINGS (the entire UNIVERSE of endless SPACE, with all planets, suns, stars, etc., etc.) in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he left NOTHING that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him. But we see Jesus ... crowned with glory and honor; ... For it became Him ... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain (forerunner -- pioneer) of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:7-10).

Brethren, CAN YOUR MIND COMPREHEND THE TRANSCENDENT MAGNITUDE OF THAT SUPREME PURPOSE? The entire UNIVERSE to be put UNDER SUBJECTION to you? That means you are to RULE over it all -- IF you are submissive, obedient to God and His government over you NOW!

Do you want to let resentment against God's government over you NOW disqualify you -- snatch you from God's GRACE and PURPOSE for you, and cast you into a lake of fire? God's PURPOSE for us is SO GREAT, we need to FEAR lest Satan divert our minds from that GOAL! Satan is subtle!

Just WHAT IS GOD? He is CREATOR! But He maintains -- preserves -- what He creates. HOW? By His GOVERNMENT -- the GOVERNMENT OF GOD!

We cannot clearly UNDERSTAND whether God has put HIS GOVERNMENT in His Church -- and WHAT KIND -- unless we understand His PURPOSE, and HOW it has been worked out FROM THE VERY BEGINNING! It is because I did not yet fully and rightly understand church organization and government 'way back in 1939 -- 35 long years ago! And without this knowledge Satan could DECEIVE YOU, right now!

Begin at the very BEGINNING: "God created the heaven and the earth." There is every evidence this was a PERFECT creation. God is PERFECT! At this creation, the angels shouted for JOY -- they were so happy! (Job 38:7.) Angels were put here to populate the earth. The archangel, the cherub Lucifer, was put here as King, to administer the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. He had been trained in God's Government over the UNIVERSE by having been one of the two cherubim whose wings covered the very throne of God at the Headquarters of the UNIVERSE. (Isa. 14:12, Ezek. 28:14, Exodus 25:17-21.)

Let us ask, Was the Government of God -- the Kingdom of God -- established on earth? What made a devil out of Lucifer? Notice carefully -- speaking of Lucifer. It is written, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt MY THRONE above the stars (angels) of God"(Isa. 14:13). He had a THRONE. He was KING of GOD'S GOVERNMENT on earth. His throne was on earth, not in heaven. He plotted to ascend from earth into heaven. He plotted to take over the whole UNIVERSE.

Was this GOVERNMENT originally GOD'S Government? Notice now in Ezekiel 28, where Satan is portrayed as the KING of Tyre, over the HUMAN ruler, the Prince of Tyre. God said (verse 12), he sealed up the sum of wisdom, perfection, and beauty. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth," ... God had set him there, ... "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity (lawlessness) wast found in thee" (verse 13, 15).

Notice, God had set him originally as one of two cherubim whose wings covered the Throne of GOD over the universe. God created him PERFECT -- until ... how long? It might have been millions of years, or only one year ... until iniquity was found in him. Finally he had SINNED (verse 16). His heart became "lifted up" because of his beauty. God said, "thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (verse 17).

So he was created perfect, with beauty, wisdom, brightness. He had been over the very throne of GOD -- seat of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. The angels SHOUTED for JOY at creation of the earth. God's Government -- the KINGDOM OF GOD -- was established on earth. The archangel Lucifer was set on the earthly THRONE. But he became corrupt, a REBEL against the GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

God's GOVERNMENT is based on God's LAW. God's LAW is LOVE. It is LOVE to GOD, and LOVE to neighbor. It is serving, helping, sharing. It is humility, love and obedience toward God, loyalty, trust, faith and reliance upon God. Satan turned to INIQUITY -- vanity, lust, greed, spirit of competition and taking, disloyalty, selfishness, jealousy, envy, resentment, rebellion, hatred.

Now how about the ANGELS placed on earth UNDER Lucifer? They SINNED (II Peter 2:4). Their first estate was the earth, but they "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6), and ascended with Lucifer to TAKE OVER the Throne of God. Then they, with him, were cast back down to earth.

These were created HOLY ANGELS. How long do you suppose it took Satan, once he turned to iniquity, to TURN ALL HIS ANGELS INTO REBELLION? That might have required millions of years! But God does not reveal how long.

Lucifer (Light Bringer) became Satan (Adversary, Competitor), and the angels (his one-third -- Rev. 12:4) became demons. Their UNIVERSAL SIN over ALL THE EARTH plunged the earth into darkness and chaos. UNIVERSAL SIN and rebellion brought UNIVERSAL darkness and chaos to the WHOLE earth.

But at this point consider -- and consider more thoroughly than you probably ever did before! UNDERSTAND, more fully! WHY did God create MAN and WHY did He put man on the earth? There was, of course, PURPOSE! But WHAT led up to the NEED of that PURPOSE? WHY was that purpose made necessary?

I feel that most of us do not yet fully comprehend what brought it all about -- the REAL REASON!

So let me lead into it by asking, DOES GOD KNOW EVERYTHING? Admittedly, He could! But He has wisely chosen to make both angels and, later humans, free moral agents -- with FREE CHOICE. Otherwise neither angels nor humans could possess CHARACTER. To allow FREE CHOICE, God chose NOT TO KNOW what they would decide. God gave the angels minds of their own. He created angels out of spirit -- composed of spirit -- not of flesh and blood like humans. Angels were made immortal -- they never die. They were each individually created. They do not reproduce themselves.

God bestowed upon angels minds possessing GREAT KNOWLEDGE -- superior to that possessed by man. One might suppose that, endowed with so great KNOWLEDGE, and being created HOLY angels, that they would never choose wrongly, or commit sin. Many scientists, philosophers and educators have contended that, given sufficient KNOWLEDGE, man would solve all his problems upon earth, and end all the existing evils.

But possession of KNOWLEDGE has neither solved troubles nor prevented evils. In the decade of the 1960's, human knowledge DOUBLED, yet the problems and evils doubled also. God placed, apparently, a third of all the angels upon earth at its creation. Their superior knowledge did not prevent rebellion, sin, and worldwide chaos, darkness and destruction. Angels had superior KNOWLEDGE, superior POWERS, were endowed with FREE CHOICE -- and still all that KNOWLEDGE did not safeguard against misuse and SIN -- they chose rebellion and EVIL.

Now consider further. God could have created angels in such a manner that they could not rebel or sin. That is, so that they would have been UNABLE to do wrong. But then they would have had to be mere automatons -- like an automatic mechanism -- without thought, choice, or CHARACTER. And an automatic mechanism is not what God wanted to create.

Perhaps God was proving things. The angels under Lucifer were holy -- and Lucifer himself, sealing up the sum of wisdom, perfection and beauty -- created perfect! Yet he led the rebellion, and evidently induced his angels to follow him in super-sin. Their experience proved -- as humans have since proved -- that KNOWLEDGE ALONE will not guarantee right performance. A third of all the angels did deliberately turn to evil.

So possession of vast KNOWLEDGE, and endowment with FREE CHOICE does not constitute perfect righteous CHARACTER. Neither does it prove that the remaining two-thirds of the holy angels will not turn to SIN. It merely leaves the attainment of perfect, righteous CHARACTER uncompleted as of now.

But now look at GOD HIMSELF, and consider what He must have considered. God Himself possesses PERFECT RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER. God will not sin. God will not go contrary to the perfect, holy spiritual LAW which He created and set in living, active inexorable motion, to cause and produce ALL GOOD. God has so set Himself that He CANNOT SIN.

So here we have the state of things, as God saw them, after the sinning Devil and demons were cast back down to the earth they had RUINED! When the earth first was created, the angels SHOUTED FOR JOY! There was HAPPINESS, joy, ecstasy, perfect PEACE on the earth as long as THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD was administered on earth.

Can we see, therefore, that God had these facts to consider: That immortal beings possessing GREAT KNOWLEDGE and freedom of choice without proven RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER could not guarantee the PRESERVING of what God had CREATED here. Then also, that beings possessing the perfect holy and righteous CHARACTER that God possesses WOULD preserve and maintain God's CREATION. This led of necessity to the great PURPOSE God had in mind for creating and putting MAN on the earth.

God's overall PURPOSE in creating and putting man on earth, therefore, was DUAL:

- 1) The RESTORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD upon earth.
- 2) To REPRODUCE HIMSELF, and thus produce an unlimited number of beings, begotten and BORN of God into GOD'S OWN DIVINE FAMILY having developed PERFECT HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER, that WILL NOT, and shall have so SET THEMSELVES that they CANNOT SIN (I John 3:9). That is the only guarantee that the Creator GOD may perfectly PRESERVE that which He designs and creates.

This great purpose of God reproducing Himself means immortal beings BORN into the very Family of which God is the Father -- beings who, having free moral agency with supreme mind, knowledge, powers of thought, decision, volition, still have achieved such perfect and righteous CHARACTER that they WILL NOT ever commit SIN.

You see GOD is CREATOR, and PRESERVER of His creation. Satan and his angels turned to DESTRUCTION -- became DESTROYERS.

So God created mortal MAN in His own likeness -- same form and shape -- so man could be begotten and then BORN of God -- having power of MIND and intellect -- similar, but inferior to, that of God or angels. But He chose to form man of the dust of the ground -- material substance. To give man powers of intellect, God put WITHIN man a spirit, which transmits to the human physical brain the power of intellect. God purposes to develop in man the same PERFECT CHARACTER as God -- so that, when BORN of God and changed to SPIRIT COMPOSITION and immortality man, like God, will not and CANNOT sin.

Such CHARACTER is something that cannot be instantaneously created -- else it would be an automaton -- a mindless robot. It must be DEVELOPED with latitude of FREE CHOICE. It must be developed by EXPERIENCE and right teaching. This requires TIME. So God allocated 7,000 years for the process. And He made man mortal, so that if man finally makes a deliberate choice to rebel, he is subject to extinction. God, in great supreme love and mercy, will not allow man to bring on himself perpetual, eternal suffering. But if redeemed and he becomes a persistent OVERCOMER, growing toward perfection, he is able to be finally BORN of God.

So, as a result of the rebellion of Satan and his demons, TOTAL CHAOS and darkness had come to the entire physical earth. The minds and attitudes of Satan and the demons had become perverted.

Now we come to the second verse of Genesis I. The GOVERNMENT OF GOD, by which God preserves what He has created, had been removed from the earth. God proposes to RESTORE His Government by and through MAN, finally redeemed through Christ, and BORN into the GOD FAMILY. His DUAL purpose, remember, is to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD UPON EARTH, and to preserve it by means of REPRODUCING HIMSELF, by bringing MAN into perfect righteous character, ultimately BORN into the God Family.

So, in six days, God renewed the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30), restoring light and beauty -- and creating MAN!

Adam was given the opportunity to qualify to replace the disqualified Satan as King, administering the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over the earth. God taught our first parents THE WAY of His Government, based on His Spiritual LAW. The fact that God pronounced the DEATH PENALTY (Gen. 2:17) for transgression is evidence that God revealed to Adam God's Government based on His LAW. He could not have pronounced the penalty for disobedience without having also explained His LAW and His GOVERNMENT. God also (through the tree of LIFE) offered the GIFT of His Holy Spirit and ETERNAL LIFE.

But the first Adam took to himself the deciding of the KNOWLEDGE of what is GOOD and what is EVIL. Thus he disobeyed and rejected THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. His children -- all humanity -- have followed that way ever since.

And now, God marked out a 7,000 year period of time to accomplish His PURPOSE in MAN. The first six of these millennial days were allocated for man's trial and test under the sway of Satan. Satan could not, consistent with the principles of God's Government, be removed from office until a successor had been qualified and inducted into office.

Did God KNOW what decision Adam would make? Perhaps not, yet He most certainly must have known the probabilities, under Satan's sway. But the Logos -- the "WORD" who became Jesus Christ, by whom God the Father had created ALL THINGS -- had offered before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) -- to divest Himself of immortal glory, to redeem MAN.

This first 6,000 years is now fast coming to its close. In it, God has demonstrated, by 6,000 years of human sin, and the resultant pain, sorrow, suffering, unhappiness, and frustration that Satan's way only harms, injures and destroys the one who follows that way of SIN.

This 6,000 years is to be followed by ONE thousand years of PEACE, HAPPINESS, JOY, ABUNDANCE under the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, restored on earth by the living CHRIST, soon coming as KING of kings and LORD of lords to RULE ALL NATIONS with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, finally RESTORED to earth under Christ!

This will demonstrate once and for all, that GOD'S WAY -- His GOVERNMENT -- is the ONLY way that produces ALL GOOD. It will demonstrate it not only to all mankind, BUT ALSO TO THE REMAINING TWO-THIRDS OF THE STILL HOLY ANGELS!

So, IN this unhappy world under Satan's sway, finally there appeared a man, Abraham, who obeyed God. Four hundred and thirty years later, God took Abraham's descendants, delivered out of Egyptian slavery, and with their agreement formed them into a Nation having GOD'S GOVERNMENT. To administer God's Government at the start, God specially prepared and chose ONE MAN, Moses.

Notice, now, the FORM, or PRINCIPLE of God's government in ancient Israel: It's given in Exodus 18:13-29.

Moses "sat to judge the people ... from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? ... And Moses said ... I do make them know the statutes of God, and His

laws. And Moses' father-in-law said ... Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge ... and all this people shall go to their place IN PEACE."

Here is government FROM THE TOP (GOD) on down. Here is God's own PYRAMID principle of government in ancient Israel.

At that time the whole NATION -- with church and state united -- occupied one concise area. The form of organization could be administered by ONE MAN under God, at the top. It was Government from GOD. Under the Eternal God in authority was Moses. Under Moses a NUMBER of rulers, each over THOUSANDS (it could have been several thousands under each ruler). Under each ruler of a thousand, rulers over hundreds. Under each ruler of a hundred, rulers of fifties, and under each of them rulers of tens.

It was RULE FROM THE TOP DOWN -- that is, FROM GOD -- it was the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! God chose Moses. Moses chose rulers of thousands, and so on down.

But some of the people refused to recognize it as GOD'S GOVERNMENT, and called it MOSES' government, just as a small FEW have risen up in God's Church today, to rebel against THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Notice it. It's in Numbers 16: "Now Korah, ... and Abiram, ... and On, ... took men, and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty of the princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation (the Old Testament Church), men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them (precisely what the dissenters are saying now in God's Church), and the Eternal is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?"

They denied GOD had chosen and empowered Moses. They accused him of "lording it over them."

Continue in the Scripture record:

"And when Moses heard it he fell upon his face: and he spoke unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Eternal will show who are his, and who is holy; ..."

The following day,

"And it came to pass, as he (Moses) had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them (the dissenters): And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They ... went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation" (verses 31-33).

That is to warn us today:

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:11-12).

Let us pray earnestly that others shall not perish, spiritually, among the dissenters today. Their death could be ETERNAL EXTINCTION -- Korah will be resurrected.

But even before this, Aaron and his sister (the prophetess Miriam) had accused Moses. See Numbers 12:

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, hath the Eternal indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Eternal heard it. ... And the Eternal came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I the Eternal will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Eternal shall he behold: wherefore, then, were ye NOT AFRAID to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against them: and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: ..."

When people criticize and accuse one whom GOD has chosen and set over them, it is not the human servant, but GOD they are accusing.

In the days of Samuel, the people of Israel rejected GOD as their real Ruler, ruling through such humans as HE chose, as at that time, God was ruling through Samuel. They demanded a MAN to be their king. God gave them Saul, who rebelled against God. Then God gave them David, a man after His own heart. Still it was government FROM THE TOP DOWN!

That is God's PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENT. It's the SAME TODAY in His Church! He says, "I CHANGE NOT!" (Mal. 3:6.)

Now come to the NEW TESTAMENT. Jesus came as a Messenger bringing from God the most important Message ever announced to mankind. This Message was NEWS -- the GOOD NEWS that the KINGDOM OF GOD would be restored to the earth, and already, even then, was AT HAND for those who would accept it and its KING, Jesus.

Jesus called, and chose TWELVE Disciples (students or learners), to become His Apostles. TWELVE is the number of a JURY -- the unanimous verdict of which CONFIRMS a truth. They became EYEWITNESSES to CONFIRM the truth of the RESURRECTION -- by which we may ENTER INTO the KINGDOM OF GOD. They were SENT to proclaim the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD and to be eyewitnesses to the RESURRECTION.

To carry on God's WORK of proclaiming Christ's GOSPEL, God chose TWO on earth, under the resurrected living CHRIST, as His leaders here on earth: Peter to those Israelite born, and Paul to the Gentiles.

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.)" (Galatians 2:7-8)

As we progress through the Bible on the question of GOVERNMENT, the PRINCIPLE of government, from the TOP DOWN, is consistent. But the application, or details of STRUCTURE differs, and varies to adapt to the time, conditions and facilities. The revolters from God's Work confuse structural form with PRINCIPLE of government, which is ALWAYS from the TOP (GOD) down. They are NOT THE SAME.

In the Old Testament, God chose ONE (Moses, Samuel, Saul, David, etc.) at a time, UNDER GOD, because Israel was ONE nation in ONE location or area. ONE at the top of the human level, under God, with others under him, was all that was required to administer the PRINCIPLE of government FROM THE TOP DOWN.

But in the first century of the Gospel Work in the New Testament, God was sending the Gospel into MANY COUNTRIES, over wide areas. So He organized His Work into TWO principal divisions, or areas -- ISRAEL and GENTILES. They were widely separated geographically. Communication was virtually nil, except by personal contact. Transportation was by foot, horse or muleback, or by camel or elephant, or sailboat. If Peter were the sole human head under Christ, it might take him weeks to communicate with the man next under him in Rome, if he were in Jerusalem. So God worked directly with TWO in separated areas. Today, if I, for example, need to communicate with Mr. Hunting or Dr. Meredith at Bricket Wood, or with Mr. Luker at Sydney, Australia, I can usually reach them in a matter of three minutes to an hour or so by telephone. Or I could reach them in a matter of hours by airplane. With such communication and transportation facilities available today, Christ requires only ONE, once again, directly under him. Several times I have questioned whether Christ would ordain one or several more apostles, but always on counseling with evangelists, their response has been a decisive and absolute "NO."

In the first century, GOD HIMSELF chose Paul and committed to him authority directly under Christ, the Gospel Work to the Gentiles. He was not chosen APART FROM, or CONTRARY to or IN OPPOSITION to Peter or to the HEADQUARTERS at Jerusalem, as dissenters have CHOSEN THEMSELVES, apart from, and in opposition to, God's HEADQUARTERS today. When Paul went to Jerusalem Headquarters, it was by revelation from God. He communicated to the leaders there what he preached to the Gentiles, lest he might be preaching CONTRARY to them as God led them, and thus might have been preaching IN VAIN -- as he would have been, if he preached a DIFFERENT Gospel (Gal. 2:2 and 1:8-9).

Paul was called separately and directly by Christ. He was NOT one of Peter's sons in the Lord. He was not one UNDER Peter who, on his own, broke AWAY from Peter and God's Headquarters, and set himself up as HEAD of a competing church seeking to DESTROY GOD'S Church. The dissenters today CANNOT claim they are following Paul's example.

YOU, Brethren, today, ALL were called, directly or indirectly through me and THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD doing the WORK of God -- you are all MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN CHRIST. Compare I Corinthians 4:14-16: "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ (or who pose as being), yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." So far as following Paul's example is concerned, God IN PERSON directly called and guided Paul in a way he does not YOU, and the turning away of the dissenters CANNOT be justified by any comparison with Paul, and the Government of God through Paul.

Brethren, we in God's Church are being trained and prepared, NOW, to RULE in the Kingdom of God during the millennium. What KIND (principle) of government are we being trained to administer?

At that time, beginning with Christ's coming and the resurrection, Christ will be KING of kings over ALL NATIONS (Rev. 19:16). Directly under Christ, over Israel -- that is all the nations springing from the twelve tribes of Israel -- will be the resurrected David. Notice: "For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Eternal of hosts, that I will ... burst thy (Israel's) bonds ... but they (Israel) shall serve the Eternal their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them (Jeremiah 30:8-9).

Notice again: At the beginning of the millennial reign under Christ, God will unite Israel (ten tribes) and Judah once again into ONE NATION, in the land of ancient Israel (Ezek. 37:22) with one king over them. "And David my servant shall be king over them" (verses 24-25). Again, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David" (Ezek. 34:23)

Of course, also under Christ will be others over the Gentile nations, but God has not revealed who specifically. But, UNDER DAVID, God does tell us who shall rule those of each of the twelve tribes.

Peter had asked Jesus what the twelve apostles would have in the Kingdom during the millennium.

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

Will there be others UNDER each king over one tribe? Turn to Luke 19, beginning with verse 11. Jesus gave a parable to His disciples, because they thought the Kingdom of God should immediately appear in their time. (Some dissenters, like the Baptists or other Protestants, are now coming to believe it did appear then, IN THEIR HEARTS.)

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country (God's throne in heaven) to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return (to earth). And he called his ten servants (so-called lost ten tribes of Israel), and delivered them ten pounds (British money, here representing symbolically God's Holy Spirit, or spiritual gifts for the operations in the WORK of God in the Church, NOW) and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens (Judah -- the Jews -- His own to whom he came and who received Him not -- John 1:11) hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom (second coming of Christ to RULE all nations), then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he (Christ) said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou AUTHORITY over TEN CITIES. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he (Christ the King) said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities." And the one who had accomplished NOTHING in God's CHURCH, now, lost even that which had been given to him.

This shows we are REWARDED (not saved) according to OUR WORKS -- according to how much we have GROWN in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ -- how much we have SUPPORTED GOD'S WORK, either actively in a specific position, or by our prayers, encouragement to those who do serve, tithes, etc.

Later, from heaven Jesus said: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my WORKS unto the end, to him will I give POWER over the nations, and he shall RULE THEM with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). And, again,

"To him that overcometh (grows in SPIRITUAL CHARACTER) will I grant to sit with me in my throne (in Jerusalem), even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in my Father's throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Brethren, we are IN TRAINING, NOW, for that RULE in the KINGDOM OF GOD.

And what PRINCIPLE of government? From the TOP DOWN. From GOD -- it is HIS Government -- the GOVERNMENT of God the Father. Under Him is Christ. Under Christ, over ISRAEL will be the resurrected DAVID. Under David, each over one of twelve tribes, the TWELVE ORIGINAL APOSTLES. Under each of them, rulers over CITIES.

DEMOCRACY, from the bottom up -- every man doing what seems right IN HIS OWN EYES, would never prepare you to REIGN with Christ then. THINK, Brethren, what it would mean if you should REBEL against God's Government as HE has placed it in HIS CHURCH NOW, and follow the dissenters OUT of God's Church, into what unauthorized humans have ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES into -- an "ASSOCIATED CHURCH." I should demand PROOF that such is of GOD. There is NO EVIDENCE. It is of MEN -- disloyal, selfish men -- swayed and deceived by Satan!

But now back more specifically to the CHURCH. Just WHAT IS the Church of God? Let's see it as GOD sees it, in relation to His OVERALL PURPOSE.

Remember, God's overall PURPOSE in creating and putting MAN on earth may be stated as:

- 1) The RESTORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD UPON EARTH. And to do this by means of,
- 2) REPRODUCING HIMSELF, thus producing an unlimited number of beings begotten and finally BORN of God into the divine FAMILY OF GOD, having developed holy and righteous CHARACTER that WILL NOT, and therefore cannot violate or transgress GOD'S GOVERNMENT, and, with God's GOVERNMENT, ultimately to RULE THE UNIVERSE.

Just WHAT, then, is the KINGDOM OF GOD? The KINGDOM OF GOD is, 1) the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, but also it is 2) the FAMILY OF GOD, which, being the RULING Family, governs the UNIVERSE.

As the FAMILY of God, consisting of the Father, and the BORN (immortal spirit-composed) SONS of God, it is (will be) a DIVINE ORGANISM.

As the RULING Family it also is the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, organized from the TOP DOWN.

Now WHAT, then, is the CHURCH OF GOD? Under the Old Testament there was the Congregation (Assembly -- Church) of ISRAEL, consisting of physically-begotten and born DESCENDANTS OF Israel. Under the NEW Testament, it is the Church of GOD -- consisting of the spiritually begotten (not yet born) children of GOD. The CHURCH OF GOD, at the coming of Christ and the resurrection, will, BY the resurrection, BECOME the KINGDOM OF GOD.

And since the CHURCH OF GOD is to BECOME the KINGDOM OF GOD, it is now, 1) a spiritual Organism, in which each begotten child of God has a personal contact, through Christ, in prayer and in fellowship, with the Father of the Family of which each of us is a begotten child. And in order to carry out the Divine Great Commission, 2) an ORGANIZATION, organized with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, to carry on what we customarily refer to as the WORK OF GOD.

Now let's look into New Testament teaching to see how this is POSITIVELY REVEALED.

Take the Apostle Paul, called and chosen by Christ direct, as leader, under Christ, in getting THE WORK to the Gentiles, as well as the conducting of services in the churches, after the Work has resulted in conversions and local churches -- that is, the function of "feeding the flock," after THE WORK has not only proclaimed the Gospel as a witness, but also resulted in conversions and adding members to the Church.

I quoted from Galatians 2:7-8 about how Paul was assigned by Christ to head THE WORK to the Gentiles.

Now notice Titus 1:4-5 and 2:15 -- Paul wrote to Titus (UNDER PAUL),

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith (even as those under me in THE WORK today, are MY own sons, directly or indirectly, in the Lord), ... from God the Father (first in rank) and the Lord Jesus Christ (second in rank) our Savior. For this cause left I (next in rank -- to Gentiles -- under Christ) thee (under Paul's authority in the Work) in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders (under Titus who is under Paul, who is under Christ) in every city as I had appointed thee."

Paul gave reason, in the following verses, for GOVERNMENT and AUTHORITY in the Church -- "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers ... whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses (even as those fighting against order and government in God's Church are doing today),

teaching things they ought not (as right now), for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, (lazy gluttons -- RSV), ... This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." And Paul adds, chapter 2:15, "... and REBUKE, with ALL AUTHORITY."

Yes, God's Government is NECESSARY in His Church, and He PUT IT THERE!

No authority in the Church? What did God MEAN when He says in His Word?

"OBEY them that have the RULE over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account (as I know I shall) that they may do it with JOY, and not with grief for that (causing those over you grief) is unprofitable for YOU. Pray for us (THOSE OF US GOD HAS SET IN AUTHORITY TODAY) for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things, willing to live honestly" (Heb. 13:17-18).

No government in God's Church? Then WHY did God inspire this to the Thessalonians?

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are OVER YOU in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (I Thes. 5:12-13).

One of the things SATAN works overtime in injecting into any mind that will let it enter, is RESENTMENT OF AUTHORITY. GOD'S authority is administered in LOVE -- and actually as one SERVING those under His authority for THEIR GOOD and out of loving CONCERN for them. That is the way I try to use what authority God has delegated to me, and I try to teach those under me to use it in the same manner -- as a servant, not one lording it over those under him -- as JESUS gave us an example. Satan DESPISES government, except as HE himself harshly and in hate employs it.

But what does GOD say about DESPISING GOVERNMENT?

"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and DESPISE GOVERNMENT. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (II Peter 2:10-12).

Brethren, THAT'S GOD'S WORD, not mine! Now notice I Corinthians 12: In this chapter God is showing that in THE WORK of the Church -- proclaiming the Gospel to the world, and feeding the flock, there are different ADMINISTRATIONS, different OPERATIONS, in the Church, and for these, God has given various spiritual GIFTS, or empowerments, by His Holy Spirit.

ADMINISTRATORS refer to performance of executive duties, MANAGERIAL responsibilities, rather than policy-making. For example, in the U.S. Government, the LEGISLATIVE Branch, that is, Congress, with the Senate and the House of Representatives, makes the laws. The PRESIDENCY is the EXECUTIVE Branch, the Supreme Court the Judicial. The Presidency, or Executive Branch is called "the ADMINISTRATION." So in the Church, God has set differences of ADMINISTRATIONS. For example, we have today the Division of Church Administration (CAD), or, Executive Administration over ministers and churches. There is the Educational Administration, or Executive direction over the Colleges and Imperial Schools. There is Publishing Administration, Broadcast Administration over radio and TV, etc. This of necessity requires organization. The exact pattern or STRUCTURE may vary according to conditions, need etc., but the PRINCIPLE of the organization MUST BE THAT OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT, from the TOP, God, then Christ, on down, as CHRIST has directed and chosen.

OPERATIONS, refers to functioning -- a doing or performing of what involves practical application of principle or process; the quality or state of being functional or operational; method or manner of functioning.

The very fact that God has endowed different members in His Church with additional spiritual gifts, added to their own natural talents and abilities, in itself shows emphatically that there is definite ORGANIZATION in His Church, and that the ORGANIZATION must flow from a chain of authority, according to the PRINCIPLE which GOD (our legislative branch), has set -- that is, AUTHORITY FROM THE TOP DOWN. That is the PRINCIPLE. The OPERATIONS refers to functioning according to the practical application of the PRINCIPLE of government given us by GOD.

The ADMINISTRATIONS in the Church refers to executive performance and managerial responsibilities, NOT to policy-making. In other words, adapting the method of functioning, according to the PRINCIPLE which GOD (the Policy Maker and Law Giver), not we, has laid down.

If you will put this 12th chapter of I Corinthians together with Jesus' parable of the pounds (Luke 19) and the parable of the TALENTS (Matthew 15), you will see that God gives special spiritual gifts according to each one's natural talents or abilities.

Because of these various administrations, and operations, God shows in this chapter that He has bestowed VARIOUS spiritual gifts added to the natural talents and abilities of various ones to perform the many DIFFERENT functions required for the ORGANIZED Work of God. For this purpose He compares the Church -- the BODY of CHRIST -- to the human body, with its many members performing the many functions. All members do not perform the same function. God, through Paul, shows for example, that the hand performs a different function than the foot does.

But the one individual "scholar" of Biblical research of the dissenters seems to think we use this verse 15 to attempt to prove that the right hand (a minister, for example) gives orders to the left hand (church member). That might be funny if it were not so pitifully stupid. That is not what Paul is saying, but that the hand does not perform the same function as the foot. It is speaking of different operations, different people having different talents and abilities, to which God is adding various spiritual gifts for better performance. In verse 16, Paul shows that the ear does not perform the same function as the eye. The whole body is not merely the eye (verse 17) or the person could not hear. If it had only the ear it could not smell.

But (verse 18) God has set all these different abilities for different functions AS IT HAS PLEASED HIM.

Trying to TWIST and DISTORT and PERVERT the holy Word of God by representing that Paul was trying to show that the right hand cannot talk to and order the left hand to do its bidding is utterly ridiculous, and should deceive nobody. Obviously, the right hand can't TALK, and God's Church has never represented that it can.

The man's human head is what directs the hand, the foot, the ear, and all the members of that one body. And the Head of every MAN is CHRIST, and the Head of Christ is GOD (the Father) -- (I Cor. 11:3).

So here is what we REALLY have: God the Father at the top. Under Him, Christ. Under Christ, the human head, and under the head, all the organs of the body which obey the human head.

A significant portion of the human brain is devoted to the COORDINATION of all the various parts of the body. This enables the hundreds of muscles in the human body to function together in total unity of purpose. Otherwise, each one of these muscles would be doing its own separate thing, and the body could not function. For example, the cerebellum, a component in the human brain about the size of a small orange, primarily functions as a center for coordination. When the cerebellum is damaged (whether by disease or trauma), the person is severely disabled -- even though each muscle can be directed by the brain and each muscle itself is functioning properly -- because the coordination of the muscles is impaired. This coordination function totally destroys the dissenters' concept that the two arms are

independent of one another, but only report to the head. I grant that fact, but the head, to be the head, must coordinate them so they are working in perfect alignment and unity.

Now WHAT is this chapter (I Corinthians 12) showing? That the Church is ONE -- and ONE ONLY -- and has many members. That there are different Administrations and different operations (verses 5-6). That there are different spiritual GIFTS (but ONE SPIRIT -- verses 4, 7-11). Christ is the Head of the Church, called "the Body of Christ," having many members for many functions. To show many functions, it is compared to the human body (verses 12-26). Then, we read of the respective offices in rank (verses 27-30).

So, as to RANK of offices of executive administration, and operational functions,

"And GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (languages)" (I Cor. 12:28).

That is the rank in which GOD set them. Now I want to show you how the "scholar of Biblical research" for the dissenters ranks them. I quote directly from a transcript of a sermon, tapes of which have been distributed to as many members as possible, on this point:

"Now, brethren, I think it is far better to call these titles, rather than ranks. I know the apostle is put first. I realize the teacher is put last. But I'll tell YOU, sometimes the teacher or sometimes a pastor can give an apostle something that he didn't have before, you know. And I think that this would be important ... However, IF WE turn it around from being titles, and/or administrations or functions, what people are to do as far as functions are concerned, and we turn it into rank, a rank. A rank implies rulership. It implies lordship. It implies power and authority. Well, to go quite a ways with it, you know, that's what it implies if you say rank" (emphasis mine).

Notice now! GOD says -- the Holy WORD OF GOD says: "And GOD set some in the church, first, apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers ..." That's what GOD says. But this leader of the theology of the dissenters from God's Church says, "BUT I THINK it is far better to call these titles, rather than ranks." He THINKS his way around the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and the AUTHORITY which CHRIST has delegated.

GOD SAYS, first, secondly, thirdly. But HE THINKS his way around GOD'S WORD! Brethren, GOD'S Church dares not handle the Word of God so carelessly, so deceptively.

Again, he says, "A rank implies rulership. It implies lordship." Indeed rank, as Christ set it in the Church implies rulership, and I have quoted several Scriptures above that show that. But rulership emphatically, as the living Christ taught it, and wields it Himself today, and as God's Church teaches and wields it, emphatically DOES NOT imply "lordship."

Who is the HEAD of God's Church? JESUS CHRIST is the Head. He wields RULERSHIP, and delegates rulership to some of us on earth, under Him. HE sets us the example in HIS KIND OF RULERSHIP. It is rulership IN LOVE -- meaning with OUTGOING CONCERN for the good and welfare of the one ruled under Him. He bears RULE over me. And I find no harsh "lordship" in it.

Let those who have gone out of God's own Church, because they have allowed Satan to subtly inject into their minds an attitude of resentment and rebellion against any authority over them, tell me where and when I ever exercised any harsh, hostile, unChristian "lordship" over them. I know that no such attitude is in my mind or heart.

In the word of the unconverted, those in authority do exercise lordship over those under them. Christ said it should NOT be so with us. But He did not in so saying abolish all authority or rulership. He PUT RULERSHIP in His Church. He DELEGATED authority. What He was teaching His future apostles, is that

we in GOD'S GOVERNMENT should NOT bear rule IN THE SAME HARSH AND UNLOVING MANNER as the unconverted in the world.

Let's get this point CLEAR. It's basic. Misunderstanding at this point has caused some to leave God's Church, and perhaps even God's salvation and gift of eternal life!

Notice what Jesus taught: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them (Jesus' disciples) should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, ... but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:24-26). This same conversation is also recorded in Mark 10:42: "... ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ... but so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, ..." But no one can say Jesus had no authority.

Years ago, seeing this, and not considering the many, MANY Scriptures charging some in the Church with authority, rulership, saying to "rebuke" the unruly, etc., I took the above scriptures to mean there is no authority in the Church. I did not want to exercise authority. I was still NEW in God's truth (this was over 40 years ago). So, in the early days of the parent Church of the Philadelphia era, at Eugene, Oregon, I allowed "wolves in sheeps' clothing" to come in and sow the seeds of discord among brethren. It resulted in splitting the church in two -- possibly turning half my flock onto the way that leads into a lake of fire! God had His own way of REBUKING ME SOUNDLY, making me see this in its true light. Jesus here is talking about THE MANNER in which the authority Christ delegates is used. He is NOT saying there is NO AUTHORITY.

Let's continue on and make it CLEAR. Continue in Luke 22:28: Jesus continued, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a KINGDOM, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

So you see, in the same speech where Jesus taught against "lording it over" those under one's authority, He delegated to them authority of KINGSHIP, sitting on twelve thrones.

I have had to correct some under me in God's Work on this very point -- the manner in which authority was used. Those of us in God's Church are not YET perfect. We must OVERCOME and GROW in grace. But the remedy is not to take all authority which Christ has delegated OUT of the Church, but to learn to administer it IN THE MANNER Christ has taught.

Above I have quoted GOD'S INSTRUCTION -- "Rebuke them sharply!" -- "RULE," etc., etc.

The parallel instruction on the RANK of authority in the Church is in Ephesians 4, beginning with verse 11: "And he (Christ gave some, ..." The RSV translates it more clearly: "And His gifts were that some should be apostles," etc. Continue, "some prophets, and some evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for THE WORK of the ministry (proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world), for the edifying of the body of Christ ..."

God's Church today is organized on THAT DIVINE PATTERN. The word "prophet" has two meanings. One is to receive direct from God instruction or foreknowledge of a happening. In the early first century, before the Bible was completely written, God did send a message through a prophet, who conveyed that message to an apostle. There has been no occasion for that function today. A "prophet" also can mean one who PREACHES. We do have that function in the Church today. The Bible does not in detail specify "preaching elder" and "local elder," but it appears that some local elders were preachers and others were not, but were leaders in meetings. We designate these accordingly.

And now, finally, let me repeat -- and answer -- the questions at the beginning of this important letter.

I said some in the Church DO NOT UNDERSTAND just what the Church of God really IS. I have shown that to understand, we must also know just what the KINGDOM OF GOD really IS, because, at Christ's coming and the resurrection, the CHURCH of God will become the KINGDOM OF GOD. The Kingdom of God is the divine FAMILY OF GOD, into which we may be born -- the CREATING Family which RULES and thus MAINTAINS what it has created. Therefore the Kingdom of God is BOTH the divine FAMILY OF God, and the GOVERNMENT of God, ruling the entire UNIVERSE.

Therefore the CHURCH is both the spiritual organism composed of the begotten (not yet born) children of God, and the organization or organized government of God on earth carrying on the WORK OF GOD -- the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel," -- "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations;" -- "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations," just before THE END of this age.

Next I said, some have become confused as to whether there is ORGANIZATION or government in it. I have abundantly shown text after text in the New Testament showing GOVERNMENT and RULE and AUTHORITY in the Church -- and I did not even quote such passages as I Corinthians 5, where Paul ordered the Church to "put away from yourselves that wicked person;" or, I Corinthians 4:21 where Paul said to that Church, "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" Without organization, the Church could never fulfill its Great Commission -- its VERY PURPOSE FOR BEING, at the present time. Yes, there is organized government, and RULE -- but the rule is in LOVE -- in outgoing concern for the good of those ruled.

Then I said, some wonder whether they can leave God's Church, and still be true and real Christians -- whether they could then enter God's Kingdom with His gift of eternal life.

God has ONLY ONE CHURCH on earth, which He directs in the doing of His Work -- not TWO churches - - not MANY denominations and sects, and "groups." "But now are they many members, YET BUT ONE BODY" (I Cor. 12:20 -- see also v. 12, 13). "For by one Spirit are we all (not part of us) baptized into ONE body."

Paul compared the Church to the human body. If you cut off an arm, it withers and dies -- there is no longer life in it.

The CHURCH of God will be changed into -- will BECOME -- the KINGDOM OF GOD. When the CHURCH becomes the Kingdom of God, where will those be that broke themselves off? That is a question for YOU to answer. God is the judge. The Worldwide Church of God is DOING THE WORK that Christ commissioned. It started out doing that Work. That is THE PURPOSE for which God caused the membership, for the first time in generations -- or since the first century -- to MULTIPLY in numbers, so that there could be enough to grow into a WORLDWIDE Work. The Commission is: "Go ye INTO ALL THE WORLD" -- "Go ye, and teach ALL NATIONS;" -- "for a witness unto ALL NATIONS." No other body, church, or group is doing that! As to whether you can RUN AWAY from your part in that Commission, having been a part of it, and still hear Christ say to you, when He comes: "Well done, good and faithful servant," YOU answer. I shall not be your judge -- you shall answer to the living CHRIST. I do know that I would be AFRAID to run from what God has called me to do, and then expect Him to bless me for it! And I will say, that the living Christ DOES NOT set up additional churches, on disloyalty, rebellion, false accusation, and character assassination. There is NO PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT where any went out of God's Church, separating themselves from the Body through which they had been CALLED and baptized, with Christ's approval or blessing.

I know WHERE THE LIVING CHRIST IS WORKING, and guiding, and blessing, and that's where I intend to KEEP ON WORKING!

WHY has God called you and me NOW, while we still have to fight and resist the cunning of Satan, AHEAD OF TIME -- instead of WHEN CHRIST SHALL HAVE COME, AND PUT SATAN AWAY, AND SET HIS HAND TO CALL EVERY LIVING PERSON? The answer is, TO GET THIS JOB DONE!

Dear Brethren, I feel like writing to you as the Apostle John did, as "my little children," (I John 2:1) -- for, directly or indirectly, you are my sons and daughters in the Lord -- or of the Work which Christ raised up through me. We are right now in the time of FINAL EXAMS -- of severe trying and testing -- to determine whether we shall make it into God's Kingdom and eternal life -- to be a priest or king, ruling under Christ for a thousand years -- and after that, the WHOLE UNIVERSE under our feet! The future before us is so transcendently ENORMOUS we cannot now fully conceive of it.

We have been called AHEAD OF TIME. We have Satan to fight and we need the WHOLE ARMOR OF THE LIVING GOD to avoid being deceived by his wiles and deceptions. But I wonder IF God may not have something BETTER in store for us, IF we overcome and remain firm and faithful in God's Work, than He will have for those called after Christ comes, and Satan is imprisoned, and EVERYBODY will be living under God's Government, with perhaps MOST going that way. It will surely be easier for them, then. Perhaps our reward will be greater.

Let's not fail in these final exams. If you are my children in the Lord, God has given me a truly BIG, FINE, HAPPY FAMILY filled with the LOVE OF CHRIST that passes all understanding, and we shall be together for ETERNITY!

So I ask you, dear Brethren -- and my children in the Lord -- to REMAIN LOYAL TO CHRIST IN HIS WORK -- to STAND SOLIDLY BACK OF ME AND GARNER TED ARMSTRONG IN GOD'S WORK, sacrificing even more as God makes possible, praying constantly, earnestly, fervently, and in LIVING FAITH, for us and the WORK. May God's richest blessings continue upon you.

With deep love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong