

WHERE Is the True Church?

by Herbert W Armstrong

1984 edition

Jesus Christ said, "I will build my church." He did not say "churches," denominations, "sects." He said the gates of hell would not prevail against that Church. Somewhere that original true Church exists today. But WHERE? WHICH? WHAT is the Church? WHY is it? Here is the eye-opening plain TRUTH!

WHAT about this whole church question -- as it concerns YOU? WHERE IS the original true Church that Jesus Christ founded -- the one the living Jesus Christ STILL HEADS today? That is the question that haunted me, back in 1926 and early 1927.

I had been reared, like many of our readers, in one of the respected and older Protestant denominations. From infancy I was taken to Sunday school and church. I was told that I was "saved" because I had a "birthright membership" in the church. I didn't know much about what my church believed but I don't remember worrying about that.

But by age 18 I lost interest, and seldom attended after that. On leaving school I entered the advertising profession. I was ambitious. I craved STATUS. So I worked hard, studied continually to improve my abilities, drove myself relentlessly toward that goal of STATUS!

Then, after nationwide occurrences totally beyond my control had twice taken businesses I had started, I was angered into an intensive study of the Bible for the first time in my life. So far as the Bible was concerned, I had always said, "I just can't UNDERSTAND the Bible.

Strange -- I had always craved understanding -- but about other things. The Bible seemed to me a dry, dull, dead Book that NOBODY could understand. I assumed, of course, that the churches had received all their beliefs, teachings and customs from the Bible -- but then, I just had no interest in religion.

But finally, early fall of 1926, I was challenged! I was doubly challenged! My wife had taken up with "religious fanaticism" -- that is, it seemed fanaticism to me! She claimed she found it IN THE BIBLE -- but I knew well that was impossible, because it was a belief and practice utterly CONTRARY to the churches.

"All these churches can't be wrong," I said. "They get their teaching from the Bible, and this fanaticism of yours is contrary to what they teach."

"Well, maybe they teach contrary to the Bible, then," my wife insisted, "because I got THIS out of the BIBLE!"

Argument was no use. She said if I'd show her where the Bible taught differently, she'd give it up, but not otherwise.

At the same time a sister-in-law challenged me in regard to the theory of evolution. I had never happened to study evolution in school or college. She said I was just plain IGNORANT if I didn't believe in evolution! This stung my pride! Me IGNORANT? What an INSULT!

"All right," I answered, "I'll study into the evolutionary theory thoroughly, and if you're wrong, as I know you are, I'll PROVE IT to you, and make you eat those words!"

Proving God Exists

I had always believed in GOD though I knew little about him, and just was not concerned about “religion.” Of course, I had never researched the question deeply and thoroughly, to PROVE whether God exists, or whether evolution is true. Few ever have. I just took God for granted, and supposed evolution was a false theory. Nearly all who believe either in God or evolution have assumed their belief WITHOUT PROOF!

But that was no longer good enough for ME! Now I had to KNOW!

It became an almost night-and-day study of the Bible, and of in-depth research in books on evolution, geology, paleontology, biology, physics. I delved into the writings of Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, Vogt, Chamberlain. I did research into radioactivity. That proved there had been no past eternity of matter, but CREATION! I studied the creation account in Genesis. It was a six months’ intensive research, that often involved studying until 1 or 2 a.m. But in the end I PROVED the existence of GOD and the infallible inspiration of the Bible; I disproved the evolutionary theory and did make the sister-in-law “eat those words!”

But in the argument with my wife, I LOST! She was right. I was wrong. It was by far the bitterest pill to swallow that had ever confronted me.

You see, it meant not only confessing I was wrong. That is hard enough for the carnal mind. But I had now learned HOW wrong I was, not only what I had believed through assumption, but what I had done and what I was. I had thought I was pretty good! Human nature always thinks that. I learned human nature is just plain BAD and EVIL.

I thought immediately, “If I accept Bible teaching, and begin to LIVE by it if I give in to accept Christ, become converted, live a Christian life, what will all my former business associates and friends say?”

In my mind, it meant GIVING THEM ALL UP -- for good!

It meant conversion! And that is something I don’t believe happens really, and fully, without an inner struggle. It certainly didn’t in my case. It meant GIVING UP! It meant giving up everything my heart had been set on my life goal. It meant forsaking my way of life -- a total about-face! Actually it meant giving up my IDOL, though I didn’t see it that way, then. It meant UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God. It meant giving up MY LIFE, actually, and GIVING IT TO GOD!

In the end, I did it!

But now I faced a NEW CHALLENGE! In this intensive study, I had found that “all these churches” CAN BE WRONG! I found that, so far as I knew of what the church I was reared in believed, it was diametrically contrary to the Bible.

Where Is the True Church?

Now the question came, WHERE is the TRUE Church -- the one Jesus Christ founded -- the one he HEADS today -- the one that carries out his MISSION -- the one he said he would never leave or forsake?

I had been shockingly disillusioned! It had been virtually a traumatic six months.

When I read Romans 6:23, I stared at that verse in my Bible in shocked, incredulous disbelief! It said, “For the wages of sin is DEATH.; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” I had always believed the wages we earn for SIN was just

the opposite of DEATH. I had been taught that what we get paid for SIN was ETERNAL life in hell fire! This verse says eternal life is something we can only receive AS A GIFT from GOD.

But No! Surely no! We already have eternal life -- so I supposed -- we are immortal souls! I learned that many theologians INTERPRET that verse -- that is, they PUT A DIFFERENT MEANING INTO IT. They change the meaning of the words to make them conform to their belief instead of letting God's Word change their belief to conform with God's Truth. They manufacture a new definition of the word death. They define death to mean "separation from God." I looked at this verse again. On the one hand, for sin, we get death. On the other hand, the opposite of that penalty is ETERNAL LIFE. Now, it certainly was clear, if ETERNAL LIFE is the very opposite of DEATH, then DEATH cannot mean eternal life!

I was shocked to find that in many -- if not most -- teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Testament, the churches now teach the very opposite, and follow opposite customs and practices! I was confused! My head was swimming!

But there it was, in plain language. I read that SOULS can die! "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"! (Ezek. 18:4, 20). It was important enough to be stated twice. Then my startled eyes read, in Revelation 16:3: "And every living soul DIED in the sea." That said SOULS can DIE. Then I saw where Jesus said souls can be DESTROYED! But "... rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna]" (Matt. 10:28).

It began to look like the churches were wrong, after all! But did not Jesus Christ found his CHURCH? He surely did, and I found where he said the gates of the grave would never prevail against it -- IT COULD NOT BE DESTROYED! I found where Jesus Christ said he would never leave nor forsake it -- where he would always be "in the midst" of it. I found where he was the living HEAD of it! Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. HE IS STILL ALIVE!

So WHERE was the Church he was guiding, directing, and using?

I was perplexed. But I kept searching. I continued studying. I found this discovery of new -- to me -- truth the most fascinating and interesting pursuit of my life. It was like finding new gold nuggets -- new riches -- only these were spiritual riches.

But I was not to learn WHERE, and WHICH, is the one true Church Christ founded for some time. I learned that Jesus called his disciples, who were to become the foundation of the Church, to come out of the world and "be separate" (II Cor. 6:17-18). Also Jesus said to God his Father that he did not even pray for the world (John 17-9). In Matthew 24:1-3 he was talking about the END of the world. I found the world spoken of in the Bible as "this evil world."

In due time I came to realize that even though the world, especially in this 20th century, has made AWESOME progress and advancement, yet it was shot through and through with APPALLING EVILS. And the evils are multiplying. WHY this paradox of good and evil?

I was not to learn the PURPOSE of the Church -- the reason Jesus started it -- until I learned the truth about the very foundation of the world itself.

Who, What Is God?

I had to learn, first, not only proof that God exists, but WHO, and WHAT God is. Many of the churches of traditional Christianity believe God is a Trinity -- God in three Persons. The religion of Judaism believes God is one Person. Some believe God is mere "Principle" -- or a better something within each human.

But I found God reveals himself in the Bible. In John 1:1-5, we read of "the Word." Verse 14 says the Word was made flesh and became Jesus Christ. The Word was with God, and the Word also was God. How can that be? It is as if there was John, and John was with Smith, and John also was Smith. John might be Smith's son, and Smith is the family name.

I learned that in Genesis 1:1, it is revealed that God created the heavens and the earth. But Moses wrote that verse, and the English word "God" is translated from the Hebrew "Elohim" as Moses wrote it. "Elohim" is a PLURAL word -- more than one Person. In verse 26 of that chapter, Elohim said: "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." The word God, then, is the FAMILY name of the GOD FAMILY. And although cattle were made after the cattle kind (verse 25), man was made after the GOD kind.

In the New Testament we learn that God's Spirit in us witnesses with our spirit that we are the begotten sons of God. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Church is to be married to him (Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 19:7). So God is actually a FAMILY, into which, through Christ, we may be born. In Romans 8:29, it is stated that Jesus was the first to be born of many brethren. He was born very God "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

Since the first man, Adam, was of the GOD kind, could he possibly have been made GOD?

What Man IS

God is composed of Spirit -- he IS Spirit (John 4:24). But he made MAN of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man (dust) became a soul -- the dust of the ground became a soul. The man had only a temporary existence, kept alive by the breath of air, and circulation of blood -- and continually refueled by food and water out of the ground.

But God is revealed as IMMORTAL -- having self-containing and inherent life.

Yet we see God offered Adam immortal life, through the "tree of life" in the garden of Eden.

But God did not purpose to give this inherent immortal life to the man unless and until the man received the very holy, righteous, spiritual and perfect character of God. And this the man had to choose for himself -- else it would not be righteous character. The other special symbolic tree was that of "the knowledge of good and evil." God commanded Adam not to eat of that tree, lest he die. That was therefore a tree of death. But the tree of LIFE also was a tree of knowledge -- that is, of spiritual knowledge as imparted from God.

When Adam chose the tree of death, he took to himself the knowledge of good and evil.

Let me explain at this point that other scriptures reveal that God created man with a human spirit in the man. Job 32:8 says "there is a spirit in man," and verse 18 says this spirit in man constrains him -- suggests, sparks, impels. I Corinthians 2:11 says one could not possess human knowledge save by the spirit of man which is in him. Man is wholly matter -- not spirit. The soul is matter from the ground. But there is a spirit IN that soul, howbeit only human spirit. This spirit imparts the power of intellect to the human brain.

Let me explain at this point, the recent science of brain research has shown that human brain is very similar to animal brain. But animal brain is governed by instinct, cannot think, reason, plan, devise as man can. Animal brain cannot know good from evil -- cannot have appreciation of music, art and literature. The human spirit adds the psyche to human brain.

WHY, then, did God place the human spirit within humans, and not in animals? The answer is a profound TRUTH! The human spirit within man is the only real value of a human life for it is the means by which a human may be united with God. On repentance and belief those called by God may be BEGOTTEN of God, to be BORN as children of God -- very God -- part of the GOD FAMILY. God's Holy Spirit may thus unite with the human spirit. Thus, as in Romans 8:16, God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God -- now begotten of God and to be born at the resurrection as spirit beings.

As God was later to reveal in this intensive open-minded study of his Word, the human FAMILY, started by Adam was, potentially, the GOD FAMILY through which God purposed to reproduce himself. And human reproduction is the very type of God's divine reproduction. But this has been revealed knowledge too profound for a sinning and Satan-deceived rationality to comprehend -- except to those God has called and who have been by him begotten through his Holy Spirit. This tremendous TRUTH leads to understanding of WHY the Church, and WHICH IS the one true Church of God!

Now back to the garden of Eden and FOUNDATION of this world.

The Foundation of This World

The first human, the man Adam, was led by his wife Eve to disobey God, and reject the tree of LIFE. The tree of life would have united him with God. But upon his choice, God closed OFF the tree of LIFE from Adam and his family -- UNTIL God would send Jesus, the SECOND ADAM, to make possible reconciliation of humankind with God. Actually the PURPOSE of God's Church is to reconcile man -- unite man -- with God.

Eve had believed Satan. He said she would not die -- she was an immortal soul. She believed that, and her children have believed that lie ever since. Adam followed her in choosing SELF-knowledge of good and evil, rather than God-REVEALED knowledge following the human spirit, rather than receiving and being led by God's divine Spirit.

Stated another way, they were kidnapped by Satan, and followed the WAY OF LIFE, knowledge and understanding of the kidnapper rather than their potential Father, whom they disbelieved.

But -- GOD'S PURPOSE SHALL STAND! God will yet ransom back his kidnapped potential family.

But since the human family in Adam had chosen the way of SIN -- and since sin brought upon them suffering, anguish, unhappiness and death, God shut off the tree of LIFE, lest they gain eternal life in pain, sorrow, misery and suffering. Eternal LIFE would, through Christ, be yet made possible for all who later would make the right choice, through the second Adam.

So, it was then decreed, at the very FOUNDATION of this present human world and civilization (Rev. 13:8), that Christ, the "lamb of God" should come and be sacrificed to redeem the lost. At the same foundation of this world that started from the human Adam, it was decreed that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). But how could a man be judged after he had died?

That is described in I Corinthians 15:22-21: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all [the same all] be made alive" -- by a resurrection. This is described in Revelation 20:11-12 as the Great White Throne Judgment. The "book of life" is opened in that judgment. Those judged guilty, as all will be, shall learn that Christ the second Adam has come and paid their death penalty in their stead. And if they then repent, the tree of LIFE will be open to them. They may yet be begotten and then born as sons of God, converted into the GOD FAMILY.

However, in the meantime all have died and remain dead until the resurrections.

The Second Adam

In God's due time, some 4,000 years after Adam's sin and the foundation of this world, God sent his Son, Jesus, born of the human Mary, and sired by God. He came as the second Adam. Unlike the first Adam, he chose the tree of LIFE.

Jesus was born through the Holy Spirit of God. He was filled, without measure, by God's Spirit. He had the close relationship with God that THE FIRST Adam rejected. He was begotten and humanly born of God. He said: "I have kept my Father's Commandments (John 15:10)," whereas the first Adam rejected them and chose instead his own human good, as well as evil. Jesus thus chose the tree of LIFE.

Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). This is the first place in all the Bible the word church is used. If we are to answer the question of the title of this booklet, "WHERE Is the True Church?" we must pause here to ask, What IS a church? Just what did Jesus build? WHY should there be a church? Is there one church which Jesus built -- or many? Is the church divided into many denominations, sects and divisions? Or is there only the ONE original true Church which Jesus built?

Why the Church?

The New Testament of the Bible originally was written in the Greek language. The English word church is translated from the original Greek word "ekklesia." It means "called out ones" -- from ek (out), and klesia (called). The Greek word means "a calling out" to meet together, especially as a religious congregation. It does not mean a building with sharply sloping roofs with a steeple atop pointing to heaven, with a cross on its facade.

Symbolically the Church is referred to as the household (or family) of God (Eph. 2:19-21), and a building which grows into the holy TEMPLE to which Christ shall come at his return to earth as King of kings, ruling all nations of the earth.

But WHY the Church? WHY call its members out from those of this world? That is answered by another question. What's wrong with this world? It was founded on a faulty foundation. It is shot through and through with evils, causing human suffering, anguish, frustration and death.

In traditional Christianity there seems to be the concept that God created Adam a perfect immortal spiritual being -- that Satan came along and wrecked this perfect spiritual mechanism -- and that Christianity is God's attempt to repair the damage, and make man as good as Adam was before Satan wrecked him. That is **TOTALLY FALSE** and contrary to biblical revelation.

It has been shown that God created man **MORTAL**, with only a temporary animal existence kept alive by the breath of air, the circulation of blood, and continually refueled by food and water from the ground. Man rejected the tree of **LIFE**, which was freely offered him. Man never obtained immortal self-containing life. Instead man embarked on the way of life that results in pain, suffering, discontent, unhappiness, anguish and death. A civilization of organized society was built on that foundation. I compared this civilization to the structure of a building, built of faulty materials, on a rotten and crumbling foundation

God is **NOT** trying to repair this decaying and rotting superstructure we call civilization. God sent his own Son, Jesus Christ, as the **SECOND ADAM**, to **START ANEW**, a totally different new structure of civilization.

A World Held Captive

Let me picture it yet another way. God said: "Let **US** [God and the Word] make man in our image, after our likeness." God made man after God's own kind, just as he made cattle after the cattle kind, and every animal after its own kind. But God formed man of the **DUST OF THE GROUND** (Gen. 2:7), having temporary existence by the breath of air. God told the mortal man that if he sinned he would **SURELY DIE**. Man was not and is not an immortal soul, but a temporarily existing soul. But he could have become a child of God. Had Adam taken of the tree of **LIFE** he would have received the immortal **LIFE** of God, injected into him. God's Spirit would have entered him, joining with his human spirit, uniting him to **GOD** as God's **SON** an actual member of the **GOD FAMILY**.

Therefore Adam and all his children were the potential children of God. Then Satan came along, and through mother Eve induced Adam to submit to being kidnapped. Satan had kidnapped God's own **POTENTIAL** children. But by their deliberate disobedience of God, rejection of God's offer of sonship, and turning to the **WAY** of Satan, man not only chose the way of life and type of civilization of the kidnapper, he brought upon himself and his family the penalty of sin -- **DEATH**.

THINK WHAT THIS MEANT!

Man was allowed to make his own decision -- either **LIFE** eternal by obeying God and taking of the tree of **LIFE** -- **OR**, **DEATH** by disobedience and taking of the tree of death. Adam disobeyed.

God could not suspend the penalty he had said plainly would follow disobedience. So what did God do? How would God even yet rescue his potential children from the kidnapper? Not by compromising with HIS LAW and suspending the penalty. BUT, by decreeing at that very foundation of the world that he would send his own Son, Jesus Christ, to live without sin and then, not having brought the penalty of death on himself, Jesus would pay the penalty of human sin -- DEATH -- in man's stead.

So, thereupon, God also decreed at the very foundation of the earth that, as in Adam all humans would die, because all humans have sinned so IN CHRIST, the SAME ALL might be made alive by a resurrection from the dead, AFTER their penalty had been paid for them by Jesus Christ.

So man's only HOPE is through the Resurrection from the dead and due to the fact Jesus paid their death penalty in their stead.

BUT -- AND THIS IS IMPORTANT! God could not reopen the TREE OF LIFE to humans in general UNTIL after Jesus had come and paid the death penalty for humans -- all of whom have sinned.

God did not send Jesus to pay this penalty for some 4,000 years -- now nearly 2,000 years ago. Meanwhile, billions of people had lived and died. So the PLAN of God (God's MASTER Plan) for fulfilling his PURPOSE of reproducing himself through humans, had to begin with Jesus, the second Adam. God had allowed this world to be founded by the first Adam. He started the very foundation of God's world through Christ, the second Adam. He started it by the one man Jesus. Jesus said he would build his Church. The Church is the embryonic beginning of God's new civilization.

Just as God established his government on earth through the Cherub whom we call Lucifer, whom God set on the throne of the earth, so God's new civilization will be the government of God reestablished on earth through Christ and the Church. So God started the NEW civilization -- or government -- through Jesus, with the 12 apostles Jesus selected, called and chose out of the generation then living, in the first century A.D.

But the Church had to start small and grow. It started with the 12 apostles, and the 120 baptized the day of Pentecost A.D. 31, the day the Church was founded.

Jesus said, "I will build my Church" (Matt. 16:18). In Ephesians 2:21, the Church is called a building -- actually the spiritual temple of God. It had a FOUNDATION (verse 20). Its foundation is Jesus Christ, along with the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19-22).

Now consider this teaching of Jesus: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the Hoods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24-27). Jesus was referring to the Church, built upon the FOUNDATION of Christ, ("and that rock was Christ" -- I Cor. 10:4). Also to this world built upon the "sand" of Satan the devil and Satan's ways of vanity, self-centeredness, lust, competition and strife -- the way Adam chose -- the WAY on which this world was FOUNDED. Jesus was going back to the FOUNDATIONS of the world, and of the Church. He likened them to buildings.

The building that is the world and its society and civilization its systems, customs, governments and ways, is a superstructure, as mentioned before, shot through and

through with faulty materials and workmanship. And God is going to let that building (the world built on MAN'S concepts of good and evil) FALL -- and GREAT IS GOING TO BE THE FALL THEREOF!

God says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1).

SATAN, not God, built this house. Jesus did not come to REPAIR the improperly constructed building that is this world. He is not trying to save the superstructure built on the foundation of Satan.

Instead, Jesus said: "Come out from among them [of this world], and be ye separate" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Jesus chose his apostles to be part, with him, of the foundation of AN ENTIRELY new building -- a NEW WORLD ALTOGETHER.

Coming -- A New Civilization!

What was Jesus' Gospel -- his MESSAGE? What did he teach? Not about himself and himself only -- but about the KINGDOM OF GOD -- which is the born FAMILY of God, which will RULE ALL NATIONS with the GOVERNMENT of God, at Christ's return and Satan's removal.

To be born, humanly, each of us first had to be begotten from the sperm of human life that emanated from our human father's body. It impregnated the human ovum within our mother. But at impregnation we were only begotten -- not yet born. We were an embryo. After some four months we had developed sufficiently to be called medically a fetus. We then had to grow physically until ready to be actually born as a human.

This process of human birth is the precise type of being Spiritually born of God. Each human might be called, by analogy, an ovum. To be born of God, the divine sperm which is the Holy spirit of God, from his very person -- must enter into US, impregnate us. We are then begotten -- a divine embryo. We are begotten within our spiritual mother -- the Church of God. The Church is "Jerusalem above, the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Then we are fed spiritually through the mother, the Church, on the spiritual food of the Word of God. But we are only begotten -- not born until we "grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). It is all clearly explained in our free booklet "Just What do you mean ... Born Again?"

Jesus explained to the Pharisee Nicodemus (John 3:3-6), that to enter the Kingdom of God we must be born again. Born of GOD. And what IS God? It has been shown above that God is a divine FAMILY. But, as Creator of the universe, God also is RULER over his creation. God RULES with GOVERNMENT. All government is based on a foundational law. A law is a code of rules of conduct -- regulating the relationships between individuals or groups. God's law is God's way of life, and that way is LOVE. It is outflowing love toward and in relation to others. For the conduct of human life, it is love toward God, and love toward man. That is the basis for the spiritual CHARACTER of God.

What was Jesus' gospel? The word gospel means "good news." Jesus' gospel was the good news of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD -- and that Kingdom is the GOD FAMILY RULING OVER THE EARTH AND THE UNIVERSE. The free booklet

“What Is the True Gospel?” makes this misunderstood subject plain. Write for your copy today.

Duality in Scripture

Now once again, let's UNDERSTAND the dual relationship concerning the first man Adam, and Jesus Christ the SECOND Adam.

The first Adam was human -- mortal. But the tree of LIFE, freely offered him, symbolized yielding to allow divine GOD-LIFE to enter within him. He would have received the divine LIFE of and from God. He would have received the MIND of God by GOD'S Spirit entering him and uniting with his human spirit. He would have had this close father-and-son relationship with God. But Adam chose to “go it alone.” Instead of receiving sonship with God, accepting God's offer to come into his life, injecting into him life and production of the mind of God, he took to himself the self knowledge of good and evil.

The tree of LIFE would have brought Adam into close father-and-son relationship with GOD. Jesus, the second Adam, had that close relationship with God. He came to call sinners OUT of this evil world, and UNITE them with GOD, as the first Adam and his family could have been. Jesus came to reconcile the called out ones to GOD.

Jesus taught the gospel of the Kingdom of GOD -- the ruling, governing Family of God. Not to repair the faulty and rotten superstructure of the building which was the expanded FAMILY of the first Adam. But to call his Church, the expanded FAMILY of God, out from the building that is this world, and unite them with GOD.

The God of This World

But this world is SATAN'S world. He is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:3-4).

Satan tried to kill the infant Jesus. He tried to destroy Jesus through the great temptation, when Jesus was about 30 years of age. He caused the martyrdom of most of the apostles. He tried to destroy God's Church at its very foundation. But it was built upon the foundation of a Rock, “and that Rock was Christ” (I Cor. 10:4). The Church got off to a good start in spite of Satan's efforts to thwart it. Jesus had said the gates of the grave would never prevail against the Church. The rains might come, the floods, and the winds blow in hurricane strength, but the Church would endure.

Satan wanted to destroy it. WHY? Because this world is Satan's world. He sits on the throne of this world (Isa. 14:13). And the Church of God will fill the earth after Satan and his world are destroyed. Christ, the head of the Church, will take over Satan's throne as world ruler.

So, when Satan failed to prevent the Church from being founded and getting off to a glorious start, what did he do next? He deceived certain humans into seeking to destroy the Church from within. There's a saying, “If you can't defeat them, join them. He caused some within the Church to turn to a false and counterfeit gospel.

In Galatians 1:6-7, we read that the churches in Galatia had turned to “another gospel.” They had believed those who began to proclaim “another Jesus” (II Cor. 11:4). These false ministers professing to be ministers of Christ were in fact ministers of Satan (verses 13-15).

Thus, from false brethren within the Church, Satan succeeded finally in deceiving even the vast majority in the Church. He succeeded in turning this majority into a growing false and counterfeit church.

During the first few months of the true Church of God, the opposition in Judea was Jewish. Most Jews refused to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah -- God in human flesh. But the 12 apostles were eyewitnesses to Jesus' messiahship. They had been with him three and a half years before his crucifixion, and 40 days after his resurrection. Many, though only a minority of the Jews, believed and were baptized by God's Spirit into the Church. The Church, during its first few years, was mostly Jewish.

Then God sent Peter (Acts 10-11) to the gentile Cornelius to open salvation to gentiles. God raised up the apostle Paul to head a great gentile ministry. Some Jewish converts then tried to bring the rituals of the law of Moses, and circumcision, upon gentile converts. They wanted "more LAW." Paul and the apostles opposed this and cleared the issue through the Holy Spirit (Acts 15). Then gentile false members brought in the issue of "NO LAW." They claimed the law of God was done away -- Christ had nailed it to the cross. They taught a false Jesus whom they represented to have done away with his Father's commandments.

So it was, that before A.D. 50 (the Church had been founded in A.D. 31) a fierce controversy arose as to whether the gospel to be proclaimed was the gospel OF Christ, or a gospel ABOUT Christ.

Soon the curtain was wrung down on historic records of the Church. It evidenced the fact that a vigorous cooperative and systematic effort was made to destroy historic records of church happenings of the next hundred years. It was the LOST CENTURY in church history.

When the curtain of history is raised about A.D. 150, it reveals a church calling itself "Christian," but one totally different from the Church Jesus founded through his apostles in A.D. 31.

The Kingdom Is Not the Church

Jesus' Gospel was the "gospel of the kingdom of God" the Government of God in the hands of the born FAMILY OF GOD. The Church Jesus founded brought God the Father into the very lives of believers.

The disciples, during Jesus' ministry, were WITH him who literally WAS God in human flesh. After Pentecost, when the Church was founded, those baptized into the Church BY the Holy Spirit were also in close personal contact and communion with God and with Christ (see I John 1:3). God, and Christ, through the Holy Spirit, were IN the very lives of converts.

But, as the vast majority of professing Christians apostatized, they held only to a gospel ABOUT Christ. They turned grace into license to disobey God as Adam had done. They taught being GOOD -- but it was only carnal, human good. Their human spirit was not united with God's Holy Spirit -- their minds not united with God's. They came to worship Christ. But Jesus had said in Mark 7:7-8 they worshiped him in vain, rejecting the commandments of God, holding to their human traditions. Indeed, by today, this perverted religion has come to call itself "Traditional Christianity."

They began to build buildings they called “churches” -- with a steeple atop, and a cross on its facade. They ultimately built huge and ornate cathedrals. They worshiped form and ceremony in these cathedrals -- worshiped “another Jesus,” like pagans worshipping idols of stone, but with no personal contact with GOD THE FATHER. Today, traditional Christianity does homage to Jesus, but teaches little or no personal relationship to GOD.

A cardinal point of distinction of the one true Church from the many professing sects and denominations is this: The deceived churches of this world put the focus on Christ, sometimes almost to the exclusion of God the Father. God he comes unreal -- a mystic unreality. They are not taught that Jesus came to reveal the Father -- that Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father that it is the Father from whom our sins have cut us off -- -that Christ’s shed blood does not of itself “save us” -- give us salvation and eternal life. Rather (see Romans 5:10) the death of Christ reconciles us to God and we are saved (given eternal life) by Jesus’ resurrection, making possible the gift of God the Father through a resurrection from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection made possible our resurrection, for he was “the firstborn [by a resurrection] among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

The true Church has Christ in the right perspective -- as mediator between us and God the Father -- as personal Savior -- as our present High Priest at the right hand of God the Father in heaven -- as head of the Church -- as coming King and ruler UNDER God the Father.

Jesus, as the second Adam, came to call those drawn by God “out from among them” of this world and even its counterfeit “traditional Christianity,” and to start a whole NEW WORLD a NEW CIVILIZATION.

So, Satan succeeded in counterfeiting the Church of God which Christ, the second Adam, founded. But the gates of the grave HAVE NOT prevailed against it.

True, on this building founded on a Rock, the winds blew, the floods came, the opposition beat heavily against it. Even the true Church in the struggle to stay alive through the centuries of persecution and opposition, lost considerable original TRUTH. But it held fast to the true name of God the Father, whose Church it is. It held fast to God’s spiritual law, the Ten Commandments. It held fast to the things HOLY TO GOD -- his Holy Sabbath, paying God’s tithe. For this it was persecuted. But it has weathered the storm.

I Began to Find the Answer

I have described, in the beginning of this booklet, my own background and conversion. In that original six months’ in-depth study and research regarding God’s Law, I came among a group of brethren of that Church. They were mostly vegetable farmers in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, in the northwestern United States. They were humble, God-fearing people willing to make any sacrifice to obey their great God.

But, I wondered, could they possibly be the one true Church of God founded by Jesus Christ? They were small, of no advanced formal higher education. Yet they were the ONLY church I could find who held to the Word of God and his Commandments. They held faithfully to the things that are HOLY TO GOD -- his Sabbath and paying his tithe. They held to the true biblical NAME, “the Church of GOD.” No other church on earth

held to these three pivotal basic beliefs and practices. They were humble and sincere and would have sacrificed their lives for these basic truths.

But WHY did God bring me into contact with these people? I little realized the reason, at the time.

At this point I must backtrack and relate additional facts that occurred in my own life.

As stated at the beginning of this booklet that I had been for 26 years in the commercial field of magazines and newspapers. I did not know it then, but subsequent events have evidenced that God was preparing me through this experience for the real calling that was to come later.

I was married at age 25. A week or two after marriage, my wife experienced a vision, or a most unusually impressive dream, which at the time embarrassed me. I had not been "religious." My whole mind and heart was in my business, living at the time in Chicago, Illinois. In her dream-vision my wife had seen an angel come from the sky, at a busy Chicago intersection, attracting hundreds of people. The angel had come directly to my wife and me as we stood in this busy intersection. He put his arms around us both, saying the Second Coming of Christ was not far off, and God had work for us to do. When my wife told me the dream-vision I was somewhat shaken, for it had seemed so real to her -- yet I was embarrassed and my only thought was to get it off my mind. If it really was a call from God, like Jonah I wanted to run away from it.

"Why," I said, "don't you tell it to the minister of the church on the corner, and if it means anything, perhaps he can tell you?" I thought no more about it, but subsequently God took away my business, and then a later business established in the Pacific northwest, followed by this challenge that led to the intensive Bible study.

The religious fanaticism (to me) which engrossed my wife concerned the seventh-day Sabbath. To me that was fanaticism. But, as stated in the beginning of this booklet, I had to eat crow." In the most intensive study of my life, I failed to prove my wife to be in error. This intense in-depth study and research proved to me the infallible existence of God, and the absolute AUTHORITY of the Holy Bible as the directly inspired word of God. Decades of continued in-depth study and research since have opened a vast labyrinth of biblical knowledge and understanding that HAD BEEN LOST. By the shattering agony of having two successful businesses swept out from under my feet, and this Biblical challenge, God had softened me to the place of utter submission where I was willing to admit being wrong -- willing to submit wholly to him, and willing to believe what he plainly said in his Word, regardless of the unpopularity of such belief.

Restoring the Truth

Thus the living God began RESTORING through me much true biblical knowledge and UNDERSTANDING that had been lost through the centuries.

Now it has been clearly revealed to me how a false Christianity arose during the first three centuries of the Christian dispensation. Satan led human religious leaders to proclaim a gospel of their own ABOUT Christ, substituted for the gospel OF Christ -- Jesus' gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD. This false Christianity became a great church and is revealed in Revelation 17 and elsewhere in the Bible, named there: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE

EARTH. She and her daughter churches have preached ABOUT Christ, sometimes putting little emphasis on God the Father.

Jesus' whole mission was to reconcile those called, to GOD THE FATHER. There is ONE lawgiver -- God the Father. Sin is transgression against GOD. Repentance is toward GOD, and faith is toward Christ. Jesus came to reconcile us to the FATHER -- not to replace him.

It is significant that, after God had beaten me down and softened me, ripe for submissiveness to him, he caused me to be so crucially challenged on the cardinal point of His LAW his government his preeminency above all else, his lordship over our lives. Of all the points of God's law, the Sabbath is the one test commandment. Professing, sincere Christians will freely admit we should have no other gods before the one supreme and true God. They will acknowledge we should not bow down to idols, or take God's name in vain. They accept the commandment about honoring our fathers and mothers, the prohibition against murder, adultery, stealing, lying or coveting. They will even claim all these nine commandments are carried over into the New Testament.

The one commandment they reject and refuse to obey is honoring God by keeping his Sabbath day HOLY. God made that particular day holy, and told us to keep it holy.

A woman once told me she had heard that Saturday was my day, and she hoped this was not true. I replied, "No, Saturday is NOT my day. Sunday is my day."

"Oh, I'm so glad to hear that," she exclaimed.

"But you don't quite understand," I continued. "Sunday is MY day, and so is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. But Saturday is NOT my day -- it is GOD'S day."

In my intensive, in-depth, exhaustive study and research to prove Sunday is the Christian Sabbath, I left no stone unturned. I carefully examined every book, article or writing I could obtain that argued against the Sabbath and attempted to establish Sunday. I examined the religious encyclopedias, checked carefully the original Hebrew and Greek words in the relevant Bible texts; I read the Bible commentaries and the lexicons. I checked history.

The Test Commandment

But all arguments against God's Sabbath and favoring Sunday observance proved just that -- arguments that couldn't hold water -- arguments clearly in error and too often dishonest.

I found in historic records that there had been heated and violent controversies over this very question directly and indirectly during the first three centuries of the Church.

There had been the historic Quartodeciman controversy between students of the apostle John and their opponents over the Passover-Easter controversy. The whole question was finally settled in this false church called "Babylon the Great" by the Nicene Council, called by Roman Emperor Constantine in A.D. 325. He was the emperor, not a churchman. Then, in the Synod of Laodicea, A.D. 365 there was decreed one of the church's most famous canons:

Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather, honoring the Lord's day. But if any shall be found to be judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ." This was tantamount to a death sentence because a false church, as the

symbolic “woman” which rode astride the “beast” of Revelation 17, merely pronounced this decree, and the civil government carried out the penalty, usually death. Thus, as in the prophecy of Revelation 13:15, the Church did not herself martyr the true saints, but “caused” them to be killed.

Space does not allow me, in this present writing, to give a thorough and complete explanation of the biblical teaching on the vital importance of keeping God’s Sabbath. Our free booklet “Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?” will present a far more complete explanation.

Briefly, however, here are some significant and high point scriptural teachings:

At the end of what is called “creation week,” the following event is revealed: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:2-3). God was not tired or weary. But he set an example for mankind, and put his own presence in that day. This he has never done in regard to Sunday or any other day.

Adam rejected God’s tree of LIFE, God’s law, and God’s rule over him. There is no evidence that Adam’s family in general kept the Sabbath holy for nearly the first 2,500 years. But when God called the children of Israel out of Egypt (a type of calling the Church out of the world) God revealed to the Israelites his Sabbath.

In Exodus 16, the children of Israel complained they were about to starve. God said he would send food from heaven, in the form of manna, “to prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no.” This concerned obedience or SIN. On the sixth day of the week God sent a double portion of manna, but God sent NONE on the seventh day. And Moses said on the sixth day, “Tomorrow is the rest of the HOLY SABBATH unto the Lord” Then on the Sabbath Moses instructed them, “Today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it [manna] in the field. Six days shall ye gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath day, in it there shall be none” (verses 23-26).

On the seventh day some went out to try to gather manna. And God said, “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?”

Thus it was that God by a miracle from heaven showed his people which was the true Sabbath day. And history as well as Jewish tradition shows that the days of the week have never been mixed up from that day till NOW.

In Exodus 31:12-18 we read God made the Sabbath an eternal COVENANT between him and his people. It was an identifying SIGN by which God would know they were his people, because in keeping the Sabbath they obeyed him in a manner no others did. It identified them as his people. For no other people but the people of God had ever kept God’s Sabbath. It identified God, for creation is the proof of God. In six days he created life on earth, and on the seventh day he rested and made that day HOLY TIME -- holy to GOD!

In the 56th chapter of Isaiah is a prophecy for our present time, respecting the Sabbath. “Also the sons of the stranger, [gentiles] that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer” (Isa. 56:6-7).

In Mark 2:28 Jesus declared: "Therefore the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). So the Sabbath is truly THE LORD'S DAY not Sunday.

The Sabbath, as stated above is the one test commandment -- the one even professing so-called Christians refuse to obey. In I John 2:4 we read: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Sin is the transgression of God's LAW (I John 3:4).

The Original Church of God, under the apostles kept the Sabbath. The apostle Paul preached to gentiles on the Sabbath days for a year and six months, after he had turned from the Jews to the gentiles (Acts 18:4-11).

As the Sabbath is the identifying sign of the people of God (Jew, gentile or any race), so Sunday is the mark that identifies the AUTHORITY of false Christianity BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS -- because Sunday carries no other authority. The substitution of the pagan Sunday to counterfeit God's Sabbath is a primary stratagem of Satan in deceiving all nations, and counterfeiting God's TRUTH as well as God's Church.

One of the excuses used by "traditional Christianity" for Sunday observance is the false belief that Jesus' resurrection from the dead occurred on Sunday. But in actual fact the resurrection did not occur on a Sunday morning but late on a Sabbath afternoon. For proof of this false tradition, read our free booklet "The Resurrection was NOT on Sunday". Then read this truth in your own Bible.

Jesus said: "... in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).

This is one of the keys that unlock the door to the identity of the one true original Church of God, established by Jesus Christ, as it has continued to withstand the onslaughts of Satan through the years and centuries. But it is not the only identifying sign.

The True Name

Jesus prayed for His Church: "... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name ... And now come I to thee ... I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not OF the world, even as I am not OF the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not OF the world, even as I am not OF the world. Sanctify them through THY TRUTH: THEY WORD IS TRUTH" (John 17:11-17).

Jesus said his true Church was to be KEPT in the name of the Father -- God. Twelve times in the New Testament, the NAME of this One true Church is the CHURCH OF GOD! It is GOD'S Church, and Jesus Christ is its guiding, sustaining, directing HEAD!

In five passages where the true NAME of the Church appears, the entire Body of Christ -- the Church as a whole is indicated. Thus when speaking of the entire Church, including all its individual members on earth, the name is "The CHURCH OF GOD." Here are these five passages:

- 1) Acts 20:28: The admonition to the elders is to “feed THE CHURCH OF GOD.”
- 2) I Corinthians 10:32: “Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to THE CHURCH OF GOD.”
- 3) I Corinthians 11:22: “... or despise ye THE CHURCH OF GOD, and shame them that have not?”
- 4) I Corinthians 15:9: Paul wrote: “For ... I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD.”
- 5) Galatians 1:13: This verse repeats the one last given -- “I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD.”

Where one specific local congregation is mentioned, the true Church is called “The Church of God,” often in connection with the place or location. Here are four more passages:

- 6) I Corinthians 1:2: “THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth.”
- 7) II Corinthians 1:1: “THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth.”
- 8) I Timothy 3:5: In speaking of a local elder in a local congregations Paul wrote Timothy: “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of THE CHURCH OF GOD?”
- 9) I Timothy 3:15: “... behave thyself in the house of GOD, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD.” Here it is the Church of the Living God.

In speaking of the local Congregation collectively, not as one general Body, but as the total of all local congregations, the Bible name is “The CHURCHES OF GOD.” Here are the final three verses of the 12 which name the Church:

- 10) I Corinthians 11:16: ... We have no such custom, either THE CHURCHES OF GOD.”
- 11) I Thessalonians 2:14: “For ye, brethren, became followers of THE CHURCHES OF GOD which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.”
- 12) II Thessalonians 1:4: “So that we ourselves glory in you in THE CHURCHES OF GOD.”

In some New Testament instances, a descriptive term is added to the name, as the Church of God at Corinth, or the Churches of God in Judea. And today, it is the Worldwide Church of God.

In this world, churches are named after MEN, or after the SYSTEM men have devised, or the kind of church government MEN have thought out, CONTRARY to God’s Word, or after a significant doctrine they emphasize, or what men hope to make it -- all-encompassing, universal or catholic. But wherever that ONE true Church is, it will be named the CHURCH OF GOD.

But that is not all. Many have appropriated God’s name, but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD, as the GOVERNMENT of God, which we must OBEY -- teaching obedience to God’s Law (Ten Commandments) -- teaching REPENTANCE of rebellion and transgressing God’s Holy Law -- teaching that we may be now BEGOTTEN into the KINGDOM (Family) of God, and may, by the resurrection, be BORN into the GOD FAMILY! That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as KING of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth. Not up in heaven, but ON THIS EARTH (Rev. 5:10).

There is only ONE such Church!

It is doing THE WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a “little flock,” persecuted, despised by the world.

Personal Counsel

God's Church does have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world -- available to call on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you -- IF YOU REQUEST IT! But none of them will EVER call on you unless YOU of your own free will request it! Regarding the general public, Jesus said, "Go NOT from house to house" (Luke 10:7). Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house.

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God compels each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, and the true GOD will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volitions want to know MORE about the very Church which Jesus Christ founded, and heads today -- if you'd like to ask questions about it, why not write your request for a personal visit? We will have one of God's own ministers call on you. And let me suggest that you JOT DOWN on paper the QUESTIONS you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by more than 60 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds yes, thousands upon thousands -- are being converted their lives CHANGED by this WORK OF GOD, through "The World Tomorrow" broadcast worldwide, through the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God, through the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, and other vital free literature we send upon request. Some, not realizing one of God's own called consecrated ministers could call and explain, and answer questions, have JOINED one of the churches of this world. You cannot JOIN the true Church of God -- the Almighty God puts you in. But if you have questions about fellowship, doctrines or practice -- or ANY questions about the Church or the Bible, or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally any more (as I used to do and wish I could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN.

Weigh carefully the FACTS, according to your own BIBLE. Then make your decision -- and take what steps GOD shows you.

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