

Proof of GOD'S GOVERNMENT IN HIS CHURCH

Gary Stowers, to all of the truly called saints of God in this last Laodicean Era of God's Church: Brethren and friends, Jesus Christ has impressed upon my mind through his word and Holy Spirit that I need to write this article concerning the authority and government that God and Christ has established in his own called out body of Christians. Proof of God's government in his church is found in the letter to the seven churches. Some professing brethren seem to resent the authority that Mr. Armstrong exercised in the Philadelphian Horn of Christ. Some of them even blame Mr. Armstrong for "*setting them up to fail*" by having hierarchal government set in the Church of God. These people seem to still be unwilling to accept blame for their own failures to remain faithful to Christ, when Tkach began casting out the truth, and replacing it with false doctrine.

Humility and Honesty is Good Medicine

The truth is: Those who truly were converted to Christ, and truly loved the Word of God and his gospel held on to it, and didn't follow Satan's man away from the truth. You just don't throw into the trash something or someone that you love. Many of those people who just let go of the truth and rejected, and cast out those faithful brethren who loved it; were probably not truly and deeply converted in the first place. I don't judge or condemn those people; Jesus Christ is judge of all of his people. I do also recognize that some of those people have truly repented of following Tkach away from truth and righteousness. I

also believe that some of those ministers have repented of casting out those faithful brethren who stood up for the truth. God Almighty knows who has truly repented and made amends in their lives and relationships with the brethren, and who has not; and I'm sure he will judge accordingly. It does seem that many of them are still in denial, and refuse to humble themselves before their brethren enough to apologize and ask forgiveness from those that they have wronged. God will judge them accordingly also.

One thing that I will mention here which may help some of those ministers: I realize that being a pastor of a church is how most of the ministers have earned a living. If you desire for the brethren of God's Church to have any respect for you, or to be able to trust in you as a guide in this Christian life; then you must sincerely humble yourself and openly acknowledge your sins against God and your offences against the brethren that you have wronged. Without this humble honesty, God's saints could not truly trust in you enough to follow your lead anymore. Look at King David's example in writing his humble prayers of repentance for his evil against God, Uriah, and Bathsheba. Israel as well as all of us should feel comfortable that David truly did accept his blame, and repent in sincere honesty. As a result David was still able to have the respect of the people of Israel which he ruled over. Honesty and complete humbleness about your sins, and seeking forgiveness from God as well as from your brethren whom you have failed; is the key to your future as a minister and leader in God's church.

Christ's Horns

Now I need to get back to the subject of Christ's horns. I don't believe that there is any doubt among the true Church of God that we

are living in, and experiencing the Laodicean Age of the Church. There are however, some church ministers which teach their people that they are the Philadelphians living in the Laodicean Era. Brethren, there is much confusion being taught concerning this subject. It is time that all true Christians should learn the plain truth on this subject. God has used me to write an article titled "*JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN CHURCH ERAS?*" which will open your understanding to much truth on this subject. You can find this article on my web-site, *truecog.com* under LITERATURE. I don't know of anyone else at the time of this writing that is teaching the truth on Christ's "Horns".

These seven Horns of the Lamb of God mentioned in Revelation Chapter Five are the very **organizations of government** of Christ's body, the true Church of God. My above mentioned article will explain that to be true. I hope you value the truth enough to read that article also. It might help you to better understand this article if you have first read and studied that article, and also look up the recommended scriptures in the Holy Bible.

It is most necessary that I write these things to the scattered body of Christ. We have all experienced the corruption that was done against Christ, his truth, and his faithful followers in the Philadelphian Organization by those Satan led men who became the leaders of that organization after the death of God's end time apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. After having experienced that corruption of authority against the truth of Christ and God's true saints in that organization; many ministers and brethren came away with the idea that God's Church should have some sort of Collegiate or even democratic form of government; where the authority was not consolidated in one man under Christ, but in many. As you should have learned; that type

government has only produced division, strife, heresy, and unrighteous fruits.

The hired ministry of the Worldwide Church of God, (*biblical Philadelphian Church*); had allowed their selves to follow Satan's man, Joseph Tkach away from much truth in doctrine and practice. After several years of continual perversion of the truth, and the casting out of many faithful brethren; then many more of the brethren began to wake up. They finally realized that Satan truly had become in charge of that church organization. They were finally willing to leave that worldwide organization which had been turned into a synagogue of Satan.

Then those evangelist and ministers began to leave that organization also, and started their own organizations according to the democratic or collegiate form of authority and government. Those men blamed the hierarchal form of government that Jesus Christ had put in his church through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, for their failures to stand up for the truth when Tkach was casting out the truth: "*They were just following orders*" like a hired hand. They were still not willing to accept the blame for their own lack of deep love for the true doctrines of Christ; and their own lack of love for the brethren who they were casting out of that church organization, because they had stood up in favor of the truth.

Those organizations that those men formed were not Christ's governments or Horns; they were their own governments, and Christ was not the head of those organizations; even though many of the saints who had finally began to wake up were scattered among them. Christ had already raised up his Laodicean Horn of his church several years earlier by another man back when the truth first began to be cast

down by Tkach and his “yes men”. You should read about this in my article titled: “*Just What Do You Mean Church Eras*”. Those evangelist and ministers who finally left that synagogue of Satan and formed their own organizations had already been fighting against and rejecting the seventh horn of Christ which is Laodicea, while they were still submitted to and working for that Tkach led synagogue of Satan.

Now as I have said, these many organizations which have been raised up by those ministers which finally left the WCG organization were not Christ’s horns. *Christ only has seven horns mentioned in scripture, (Rev. 5: 6), (Rev. Ch. 2, & Ch. 3)*. These collegiate and democratic organizations had no single pastor who was being led by Christ, and had the authority of Christ to direct the organization in what was allowed to be taught and practiced; therefore those organizations were confused and divided, and as should be expected; they split apart again, and again, and again, until now there are hundreds of small organizations and groups of people all claiming to be Christ’s Church. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was slain and resurrected, and is standing on his feet only has seven horns, not hundreds. *(Rev. 5: 6)*

The above mentioned division in the scattered Laodicean Church is a direct result of there **not being one single leader who had the authority of Christ, and the respect of the body of Christ**, so that the Church could be unified in doctrine, instruction, in reproof and correction, and direction of work.

Now I ask you brethren a question: Did not God give authority to one single “*star*” or messenger in Christ’s right hand to raise up and lead the seventh Horn of Christ, the Laodiceans? **Yes, he did**, and the majority of the ministers and members alike were so spiritually asleep and out of

real contact with Christ that they didn't recognize it, or care about the evil being done against the true doctrines of Christ and his saints. They refused to take a stand against the evil of that synagogue of Satan, but the ministers bowed under to Satan and preached the false teachings and cast out those few of us who stood up to them in favor of the truth of Christ. This evil continued on for several years until they were forced to completely and totally apostatize, or else leave that synagogue of Satan organization. They also did not recognize Christ's messenger which he used to raise up the next organization or Horn of Christ; which was trying wake up, and lead the brethren who loved Christ's doctrines, out of that synagogue of Satan and into the new church organization, the Laodicean Horn of Christ. You really do need to read my article, "*Just What Do You Mean Church Eras?*" to better understand about this raising up of the Laodicean Horn of Christ.

After several years Jesus Christ has also **rejected** (*spewed out of his mouth*) that same messenger that he held in his right hand to raise up and lead the Laodicean organization and government of his church; because that man trusted in his supposed riches instead of God, and became vain and exalted his own person, and started interpreting the scriptures according to his own vain imagination; and because he became spiritually blind (*deceived*) and unrighteous (*naked*) in his own works. He also turned against the faithful members of the body of Christ, and cast out or drove out those of us who rejected his vain teachings, and loved and held on to the plain truth of God's word.

Jesus Christ determined that this "Laodicean Messenger" would not be allowed to continue to be a spokesman for him. This seventh horn messenger did not altogether reject Christ's doctrines as the Synagogue of Satan did; but he is also not altogether living by and teaching

according to the plain truth of Christ's word; but he is "lukewarm", neither cold nor hot; therefore Christ spews him out of his mouth, and counsils him to "*buy of him Gold that is tried in the fire*"; which will consist of developing **holy character, and real understanding and vision** while being humbled through tribulation and suffering. (Rev. 3: 15-18)

As a result of the evil works of the Synagogue of Satan, and the unrighteous, and lukewarm works of the Messenger to the Laodiceans; the body of Christ is scattered with no single leader or angel (Messenger) in Christ's right hand to keep them united in doctrine and work. God allows this scattered condition in his church to prove his people whether they will be faithful to him and Christ even if we don't have a physical leader to keep us all united and "on track". **We are expected to be the kings and priest of the new world; and if we are truly converted; we should not forever need a man to keep us on track with Christ.**

We should be able to teach and lead others to the right way of Christ; and not follow vain ideas and teachings, or vain men, *or vain imaginations in our own minds*. We should be strictly following the Lamb of God wherever he goes and in what he teaches; as is written of the 144000 first-fruits which will be redeemed from this world. (Rev. 14: 4) Christ must give us this final training while we are in this scattered condition; so that we are proven and purged of anything in our own minds and hearts that would prevent us from being able to always submit to Christ and his authority, not vain men, *nor our own vain imaginations*, nor any evil spirit that might try to exalt it's self against Christ and his truth. We must learn to cast down these evil thoughts and imaginations, and wicked spirits. (1 Cor. 10: 3-5)

The Stars in Christ's Right Hand

Brethren in Christ, we need to all understand that God and Christ do have government in their Church; and it is a government from the top down. There are many brethren who seem to think that God's form of government in his Church which consists of one man under Christ being in authority over the church organization is wrong. These brethren have experienced being led astray from some of the true doctrines and ways of Christ by that Satan led man Joseph Tkach and other ministers. Many of the brethren were not truly following Christ personally, but trusted that by following their pastor general, and their local pastors, that they were following Christ. (*2 Pet. 2: 1-3*) Their reasoning was not right; we should follow a church leader *only as he follows Christ*. (*1 Cor. 11: 1*) It is our responsibility to know whether our ministers are following Christ, and leading us to do so also; or if they are following an evil spirit away from Christ. In this we should always follow the example of the Berean brethren. (*Acts 17: 10, 11*) We should also have the courage through faith in Christ, to stand up against false doctrine and false ministers.

Just because God has chosen certain men to lead his church, does not mean that we can always expect those men to remain faithful to Christ in all things: Many have not! Also just because Christ has used an individual man to lead his church does not mean that Christ accepts and approves of all that that man does. The letter Christ addresses specifically to the angels (*messengers*) to the seven churches should prove this point.

We were called by God as an individual, and we are judged by Christ individually for what we do and accept in our lives. (Rev. 22: 12) If a minister goes astray from Christ; then God does not expect us to follow that man. No mans authority is above Jesus Christ. The responsibility is own our own shoulders to know the difference! (3 John 9-11) We are all held accountable to Christ for our own actions. No man is to stand between you and Christ in what you believe and practice! If teachings and practices doesn't agree with Christ, then it is wrong, and you should not follow that false teaching, even if it gets you disfellowshipped from that organization, or even if it gets you killed! Christ is our overall head, and not any man, not even the "star" or messenger in Christ's right hand. I warn you though, that we should be extremely careful to not just assume that our own careless opinions are the will of Christ! I also do not desire to take away from the authority that the "star" or messenger in Christ's right hand does have. For this cause I find it necessary to go into detail to show the authority that Christ has given to his "messenger" whom he holds in his right hand.

The division and scattering of the church should have taught us that without a single authority under Christ over the Church, that there would only be division and controversy on much of the doctrines, behavior, and actions of the church as a group or as individuals. The many split up divisions of the organizations and groups that ministers formed since the Philadelphia Church Horn was turned into a synagogue of Satan; has proved that when there is no **righteous** Messenger in Christ's right hand to direct the people and the work of the church; then they will be confused and divided, physically and spiritually.

Now we need to look at the scriptures concerning the seven Church Horns of Christ and the seven “stars” which are in Christ’s right hand to lead and rule in those seven church organizations or governments. (Rev. 1: 20) When we do examine carefully the letters that Christ dictated to those seven churches; we will see clearly that Christ has worked through one man at a time to provide overall leadership to the church. We will also see very clearly that **Christ does hold that man (“star”- Messenger or Pastor) responsible** for what is *allowed to be taught and practiced* in the Church: but that in no way does away with each Christians own responsibility to make sure to **only** follow the man as he follows Christ. Understand this, brethren: Christ’s horns are not dictatorships. Regardless of what the pastors are doing and teaching; you are still free to serve Christ. God has not given any man authority to stand between you and Christ. However, to stand with Christ; sometimes we have to be willing to get cast out of the organization for the truths sake. God has not forced his ministers to remain faithful.

I believe that most of the people in God’s Church do recognize and believe that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was the messenger or “star” that Christ held in his right hand to raise up and lead the Philadelphian “Era” of the true Church of God. That is the truth, and God did give him authority to control what was allowed to be taught and practiced in the church so that Christ could instill his doctrines in the church, one doctrine at a time as his messenger was able to be taught by Christ’s written word and Holy Spirit and be corrected, and receive the truth to teach to the rest of us. God also did set before him that open door to preach and publish the Gospel to the entire world, just as Jesus said would be done before Christ’s coming.

Most brethren that I have read their literature or heard their speaking seems to not think that there is a single man which Christ held in his right hand to raise up and lead the seventh “Era” of the Church which is the Church of the Laodiceans. They seem to think that the letter to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans is just directed to all of the many scattered groups of Christians in this age. Some of the people deny the truth about Christ’s seven church horns and eras.

Brethren if you will look at the scriptures you will see clearly that there is also an angel (Messenger) that Christ holds in his right hand for his work in the Church of the Laodiceans. (*Rev. 1: 11, 16, 20*), (*Rev. 3: 14*) The Greek word that is translated angel is *aggelos*, number 32 in Strong’s Greek Dictionary; and its definition is a messenger and pastor. This is also in agreement with what Mr. Armstrong also understood and taught. It is also obvious from Christ’s letters to them, that they were originally the pastors of the seven local churches in Asia Minor. As Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong taught; those seven local churches and their pastors were typical of the seven successive Eras of the one true Church of God down through history, from the beginning of the Church in 31 AD to the second coming of Christ.

As I have been led by God and his word to understand and write about: Those seven church eras as Mr. Armstrong chose to call them, are also **the seven Horns or governments of Christ’s Church** which is wrote about in Revelation Chapter Five. For farther proof of this; read my article, “*Just What Do You Mean Church Eras*”. Those seven angels or messengers are Pastors or leaders of the seven different Horns or governments of the Church of God to which the seven messages of the letter was intended to go to, even as each Church Horn and Age comes on the scene down through history. The messages to all seven Church

messengers are also intended to be read and understood by the rest of the body of Christ which “*has ears to hear*”. (Rev. 2: 7, 17, and 29), (Rev. 3: 6, 13, and 22) There is much that we all can and should learn from the letter to the Pastor Generals of these seven church horns.

Now as we begin to examine the messages to these seven churches, I want you to see that each message is directed specifically to the angel or messenger of that particular Church Era or Horn of Christ. That letter is Jesus Christ’s “*Pastor General’s report*” to his Pastor Generals under him. It always starts out as: “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus...”, or “Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna...” or “Unto the angel of the church in Pergamos...”, or “Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira...”, or “Unto the angel of the Church in Sardis...”, or “Unto the angel of the church in Philadelphia....”, or Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans...”.

The reason that Christ addresses his letter to the human messengers of each of the seven churches is because these men are men that Christ has chosen to hold in his right hand as a tool to accomplish his work and leadership in that particular church Horn of Christ. Jesus Christ holds these men responsible for what is allowed to be taught and what kind of behavior that is allowed to be permitted in that particular government or horn of Christ’s Church. As you look at each message to each messenger of the church; you can obviously see that Christ holds that man which he uses as a tool in his right hand to be responsible for putting a stop to some of the unrighteous behavior and teachings of that church. He also obviously holds that human messenger responsible for loving, and holding fast to the truth that Christ has given to him.

Ephesus

Notice that the messenger to the church in Ephesus has turned away from his first love of the truth. (*Rev. 2: 4*) Christ said that he had something against him for this, and counseled him to repent and do the first works, or else if he didn't Christ would come to him and remove his candlestick or church out of its place; in other words Christ would take away his candlestick (*Which is the church*) and not let him continue to be a leader to them. That actually happened in history, and Christ just used another man to establish and lead the Smyrna Church Horn or government.

When the leader of the Ephesian Church horn or era went astray; he also had many followers who also went astray with him. (*2 Peter 2: 1-3*) Their organization continued on and became the beginnings of the Catholic Church which is a **synagogue of Satan**. That is the way it usually works among people. A lot of people just look to men and follow them instead of following Christ. Many of them probably never had God's Spirit to start with, but some of them probably just compromised. That has happened in our own generation, at the end of the Philadelphian Era and horn. Christ's message to the Ephesus messenger shows that Christ holds him responsible for rightly leading and directing the whole church, and if he didn't love the truth enough to live it and rightly teach it; then he had no business being their leader, so he would be replaced, by just leading the faithful to continue in the truth even though it meant that they had to depart from that organization and its leaders.

Smyrna

Those faithful brethren who made up the new horn of Christ, Smyrna, were physically poor but they were spiritually rich *in good character, faith, courage, and righteous works*; even though they were persecuted and some were killed. (*Rev. 2: 8-11*) This is the only other church horn messenger, except for the messenger to the church in Philadelphia, which Christ did not openly rebuke for their faults in his letter. Christians being faithful to Christ is most important to Christ. Consider this: What man would want to marry a girl who is not trustworthy, and faithful? Would you like to have a wife who would follow another man away from you? Of course not! Christ is likewise. We are called to be the wife of Christ forever! It is only right that he proves us first. The Smyrna Pastor General was faithful, and indication is that the brethren of that Church were also. Christ had no open rebuke for that Church horn; but he let them know that they were called upon to experience Persecution, imprisonment, and being put to death. Christ encouraged them, and reminded them that the second death would not hurt them if they overcame their trials and temptations. Jesus reminded them that he also had been dead, but now is alive: They also would have eternal life if they were faithful unto death.

Brethren, we also live in an age when we know that many saints will again be put to death. (*Rev. 6: 11*) Consider this: Those faithful brethren in Smyrna, who didn't follow the synagogue of Satan, were not given a place of safety for their fleshly bodies; but rather they were offered eternal *spiritual salvation* if they remained faithful unto death. I personally fear that many brethren in this Laodicean Age are *counting*

on being physically protected in a place of safety, when they should rather be developing a mind set of faith, courage and love of God and his gospel so that we can be faithful unto death like those Smyrna brethren. If you personally are afraid that you wouldn't be faithful unto death; then that is all the more reason that we may need to be proven in that manner. Understand this, brethren: It would not be in our own best interest, for us to somehow get eternal life in God's kingdom, if we do not have the character to remain faithful to Christ unto death. That is why God and Christ allow many of his own faithful children to be so severely tried and tested.

Pergamos

At some point in history God raised up another man to raise up and lead the Pergamos Horn of Christ. (*Rev. 2: 12-17*) Christ told him that he knew his works and how he had not denied Christ's faith and held on to his name; but he said he had a few things against him. No matter how many good works we have, if we are not doing what is right in any area, then Christ has that against us. He that has an ear to hear; let him hear, the way that Christ judges his Church. We have a tendency to excuse ourselves for things that Christ will not overlook. We should all ask ourselves: If Christ was to send me a personal letter; would he tell me that he had a few things against me? Now is the time to fix that. We should pray and ask God to mercifully and gently show us our faults so that we may work at overcoming them.

Now what was it that Christ had against the messenger to the church in Pergamos? This man who Christ had chosen to hold in his right hand to lead and direct the Pergamos Era or Horn of Christ was **allowing** some of the people to hold to the *doctrine of Balaam*, who taught

Balak, king of the Moabites how to get Israel cursed by seducing them into fornication and Idolatry; thereby they were in disobedience to their God, their protector, and the one who blessed them. They were cursed by being seduced into sin, and receiving the judgment of God. This Messenger to the Pergamos Church also was **allowing** some to hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which Christ hates. Notice carefully brethren, the problem was not with this messenger to the Church of Pergamos practicing these evil doctrines himself; but he was **allowing** this to take place in the church without him doing anything about it to stop it.

Brethren, because Christ has this against the Pastor in his right hand, and holds him responsible; that is proof that God does give authority to his messenger or Pastor to correct the church. How could he have corrected the church? With corrective teaching, and instruction, as well as disfellowshipment of those who will not be corrected. The Apostle Paul shows this to be necessary at times, for the overall good of the whole church, *as well as for the sinning individual. (1 Cor. 5: 1-13)* The point is that Christ expects his “*messenger*” or pastor to exercise Christ’s governmental authority to **stop evil** teachings and behavior in the church; and if such an individual will not be corrected by the leading Pastor’s instruction or rebuke, then he or she should not be *allowed* to continue among God’s people.

I am reminded of a church billboard that I saw in some church yard down in Pensacola Florida back in 1987. I have never forgot that message, because I as a father to my own children found it to be so very true and appropriate for anyone in a position of authority. The billboard sign read as: “*What you allow; that you teach*”. Yes brethren we are held responsible for what we allow in our families. Ministers

and pastors, and especially the messenger in Christ's right hand are going to be held accountable for what they allow to take place under their leadership. He wasn't put in that position to just allow anything to take place in the church, but to lead and teach the church in the true doctrines and way of Christ. He is also held responsible for administering necessary correction according to the righteous, merciful and loving manner of Christ. Brethren, that is the way of God's government in his Church for keeping us all united in the true faith of Christ, and to protect the brethren from having to endure false doctrine and evil practices within the church. Without that kind of government and authority invested in some man that Christ has chosen to work through; then much of the church will become confused, divided, and prey to the devil and his evil servants. We in this Laodicean Age should be able to see that this is the result which this Era of the church has been experiencing.

Thyatira

Brethren we need to pay special attention to the message to the church in Thyatira. Notice that this message is addressed specifically to the angel (*Messenger*) to the church which Christ holds in his right hand to use as a tool to accomplish his work and leadership in the church. All true saints of God can and should be able to learn from Christ's judgment of this man and the church under his leadership; but the message is not specifically addressed to all of the church, but rather to the Messenger in Christ's right hand. (*Rev. 1: 20*), (*Rev. 2: 18-29*)

Notice that after Christ addresses him and lets him know who it is that is speaking to him; then he lets him know that he is aware of his good works, charity, service, faith, patience and again his last works to

be more than the first. By this, Christ is letting this Pastor know that he had grown and increased in good works; yet Christ lets him know that he has a few things against him. Brethren, if Christ doesn't let us know of our faults, then we may think that we are ok, and completely pleasing to God. We all should pray that God will continue to gently and mercifully help us to see ourselves more as he sees us, so that we can repent and grow in his righteousness. If we truly desire his righteousness then he will hear and answer that humble prayer. To be able to honestly pray that kind of prayer requires that we must truly seek first and above all else, the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, as Christ taught us to do. (*Matt. 6: 33*), (*Matt. 13: 44-46*)

Now what was it that Christ had against the messenger or pastor to the Church in Thyatira? He was allowing a woman whom Christ said was like Jezebel (*which was King Ahab's controlling religious manipulating wife*) who claimed to be a prophetess and was teaching in the church and seducing Christ's servants to commit fornication (*most likely spiritual fornication against Christ with other religious teachings*) and seducing them into eating things that had been sacrificed unto Idols. (*Possibly Christmas festivities*) Thereby she was corrupting some of the people's conscience toward God. Christ says that he gave her a space of time to repent, but she would not repent. Christ says that he cast her into a bed (*another church organization*) and those that commit (*spiritual*) adultery with her will be cast into great tribulation unless they repent of their deeds. I remember reading some of the literature from Mr. Armstrong or one of his ministers that wrote; that this was that false prophetess who eventually broke away from the Thyatira Church organization and started the Seventh Day Adventist Church. It does seem to be logical. Christ even says that he will kill her

children with death, and then all of the churches shall know that Christ is the one that searches the reins and hearts; and he says he will give to every one of us according to our own individual works. Our salvation is an individual relationship with Christ, and God our Father. We cannot expect to just grab hold of some ministers coat-tail and hang on to the end; we must be following and holding on to Christ, whether our ministers or other brethren do, or not. To be one of the faithful few, we must if necessary be able to stand alone, to be able to stand with Christ.

We all should be very careful to live in complete submission to Christ; for just because we were called of God does not mean that we will be in the Kingdom of God; not even if we hold on to much of the religious knowledge of Christ. Those who are called, and love the truth and Christ's gospel so much that we totally surrender to Christ, and let him live and work in us spiritually, and continually correct us down deep in our hearts and reins of our minds, and lead us to grow in the very mind and character of Christ; we will be born again into the very family of God at Christ's second coming. With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Now brethren I want you to notice down toward the end of Christ's evaluation of his messenger to the Church in Thyatira; and after letting him know that what he has against him is his allowing of this false prophetess to do her evil works in the church without him doing anything to stop her: Then Christ is still addressing him personally and saying: "But unto you (*personally*) and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden; but that which you have already. Hold fast till I come."

Notice that what Christ had against this messenger of his that he holds in his right hand; is that he **allowed** this evil, manipulative, and controlling woman to seduce the brethren and work her false teaching in the Church. By this we can see clearly that Christ does require his church leaders to have and exercise Christ's authority to put a stop to unrighteousness being taught and practiced in the Church of God. This proves that Christ does have top down authority and rule in the Horns or governments of Christ's Church, which is the Church of God.

I still want to make it clear though that we are not delivered to follow a minister who is teaching false doctrine in the Church, even if it is being done by the top messenger to that horn of the church. Just as in the example of the Thyatira messenger who was allowing false doctrine to be taught and practiced in that Era of the church; God holds us personally responsible to follow Christ and not those false teachers. Notice that Christ mentioned that some of the brethren of the Thyatira Church did stand strong against those false doctrines even as we should also do. We should only follow God's ministers as they follow Christ; and we had better know the difference between false teachings and Christ's truth. Each of us must prove by the written word and the Holy Spirit what we accept into our minds and hearts whether it is according to the will of God or not. As we can see we are judged by what we know and do; not by what some minister has told us; or by what some minister allows to be taught in that church. If you haven't **proved** what you believe; then you don't have a leg to stand on in times of temptation and trial. If you do truly love the gospel and the word of God; then you will make time to do your study and **prove** that which you believe to be the will, and teachings of Christ.

Sardis

Now brethren we need to look at Christ's message to the "messenger" to the church in Sardis. (*Rev. 3: 1-6*) I need to again make a point clear here; that the seven men who were instruments in Christ's right hand, and are specifically addressed here in Revelation Chapters Two and Three: they are not all of the presiding ministers that were leading all ages of the seven horns of the true Church of God down through history. Seven men could not have lived that long. These seven men were instruments in Christ's hand which he used to build, and or lead the seven horns of Christ which are the organizations of government of the Church of God. They did not always live throughout that Era or horn of Christ's Church.

The leadership of the Church of God in Sardis was spiritually dead by the time God called his servant Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to be converted and come among them. Notice carefully though, that Christ exhorted that "messenger" to the church in Sardis to remember how he had received the truth and heard it, and hold fast to that, and repent. (*Rev. 3: 3*) Obvious he and that horn or organization of the Sardis Church which he was leading, was not dead at the beginning of that Era. Christ says that even though their leadership and many of the members had become spiritually dead; yet a few of the brethren from that Sardis horn of Christ will "walk with him in white", for they have not defiled their spiritual clothing, but they are worthy. Christ tells them that if any one of them will "overcome"; that he will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life; but will confess his name before God his Father and also before his angels.

One obvious point that we all who “have ears to hear” should be able to learn from this is: we are held responsible for what we do, and how we live regardless of how the ministry behaves, or teaches. Follow the ministry only as they are following Christ. This may get you disfellowshipped from that organization; but we must count the cost and do what you know is the will of God and Christ.

Philadelphia

Now brethren we will take a look at the message that Christ specifically addressed to his messenger or pastor which Christ held in his right hand to build and educate and lead the Philadelphian horn of Christ. We who truly are called of God and converted to Christ in this age should all agree that this man was Herbert W. Armstrong. Notice how Christ addressed him: *“And to the angel (Messenger or Pastor) to the church in Philadelphia write”; “These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens:”* Then Christ tells him that He has set before him an open door, and no man can shut it, because he has *a little strength*, and has kept Christ’s word, and not denied his, Christ’s name. (Rev. 3: 7-8) We know that Mr. Armstrong recognized that the door that was opened to him was the same as was spoken of by Paul which was to preach the gospel of Christ to this world (*1 Cor. 16: 9-10*), (*2 Cor. 2: 12*). Christ told Mr. Armstrong that no man could shut that door that he had opened before him. Many did try to stop that work but they couldn’t! Not even the state of California could stop Christ’s work that he did through Mr. Armstrong.

I find it very interesting to notice that Christ’s evaluation of Mr. Armstrong’s Church leadership was without open rebuke like most of

the other messengers in Christ's right hand. Christ acknowledged that Mr. Armstrong **kept Christ's word** and didn't deny his name. God had revealed a lot of lost and hidden truth, and mysteries of the ages to Mr. Armstrong and he valued it and kept it, even when many others around him in the end of the Sardis Era, as well as many hypocrites in his own era of church government were showing contempt for much of the truth.

Because of Mr. Armstrong's understanding of *Christ's government* in his church; he was able with his *little strength* to control and put a stop to those who were trying to pervert and water down the truth of Christ. Satan was however, using deceived and subtle men to form their destructive plans "*underground*" in the Philadelphian Era while Mr. Armstrong was still alive; but Christ was able to use Mr. Armstrong in his right hand to stop them from destroying the truth out of that organization while he was still alive. Those "*uncircumcised*" in the heart rebels will be humbled someday and learn to worship at the feet of God's faithful servant, and then they will know that Christ loves him. (Rev. 3: 9)

If you haven't noticed yet, you should look and see that much of the things that Christ had against some of the other "messengers" in his right hand was because they were not exercising Christ's governmental authority to stop those who were teaching heresy and other evils in the church. Christ didn't have to rebuke his messenger to the church in Philadelphia for that, because he did love and keep the truth that Christ had revealed to him, and he used his God given authority to protect the church from all manner of false and deceitful teachers and their evil doctrine.

Brethren, because of this; Christ said that he will keep him (*Mr. Armstrong*) from the hour of temptation, which will come upon the entire world, to try (*test*) them. (*Rev. 3: 10*) Brethren we need to all understand that this is not a promise of a *place of safety* to all people who become converted during the Philadelphia Era of the church. This is a message directed specifically to the messenger to the church in Philadelphia.

Mr. Armstrong is resting in his grave until the resurrection which will take place at the coming of Christ in Great Glory. He has been kept from the great tribulation which will test and try all people on this earth. Mr. Armstrong had to overcome his own sinful nature just like the rest of us; but he did overcome and Christ does love him. (*Rev. 3: 9*) God and Christ have done a mighty work through this man which we all greatly benefit from. Consider this, brethren: None of us true Christians would understand our bibles and God's plans and will for us, except that Christ had used his servant in his right hand to learn it from Christ's word, and then teach it to the rest of us. Anyone who can't believe that is not converted yet. Now brethren consider this also: If Mr. Armstrong had not implemented the government of God over the Church organization; then the church would have become split up and scattered, and confused even as it is in this Laodicean Era. I suspect that one of the reasons that Mr. Armstrong chose to hire men to serve as ministers and pastors to the local congregations; was so that he would be in a better position to control according to Christ's will; what was taught and allowed in the churches. It did serve its purpose.

Christ directs the following words of encouragement to the rest of us who were in the Philadelphia Era of the church: "**Him that overcomes,** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he *shall go no more*

out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” “He that has an ear; let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.” (Rev. 3: 12, 13)

Notice that Christ tells us that if we overcome; we will be pillars in the temple of God; which is the church, which will be called New Jerusalem, and we will not ever go out, or *(be disfellowshipped anymore as we were for being faithful to Christ and his true doctrines)*. (Rev. 3: 12) Brethren notice that Christ also told us that we will bear the name of God and Christ’s new name also. That is awesome! Also consider that being a pillar in the temple of God means that we will be spiritually the support structures to help hold up the rest of the building. What an honor!

Since we must “overcome” to have this great treasure; we need to meditate on all of our sins and weak human nature that we need to overcome and take this effort of overcoming seriously. We should be so yielded to Christ so that he can freely and comfortably dwell in us, and live his life in us; for this is our hope of Glory. (Col. 1:27) We true Christians are all together being built, *(through our willing submission)* to be a spiritual house for God and Christ to live in, and accomplish their works through. (Eph. 2: 19-22) Then we shall also bare their Glory in us!

Laodicea

Now finally we come to Christ’s message to the Laodicean “*angel*” or messenger, or Pastor General of God’s Church. (Rev. 3: 14-22) Notice

again that this message is dictated by Jesus Christ specifically to his messenger or pastor which he holds in his right hand, to accomplish his work in the Laodicean Era. What was that work? Because we have lived in the Philadelphian Era, and into the Laodicean Era of the Church we can better understand the works of these two eras than we could any of the other eras of the church.

Now as I have pointed out in my writings; the seven churches and their Pastors in Asia Minor were typical of the seven successive church organizations and their “Pastor Generals” down through history, from the beginning of the church in 31 AD, to the second coming of Christ. These seven church organizations are also the seven horns or governments of Christ in his church. (Rev. 5: 6) Revelation Chapter One reveals that Jesus Christ is in the very midst of these seven churches, and that he holds in his right hand the angel (Pastor) of these churches. Why his right hand? Christ holds them in his hand like a man would hold a tool or instrument in his right hand to accomplish his desired work.

What was the reason for Christ to choose another man to raise up the seventh organization of his Church? As I have made clear in my other writings; God tested and proved his church, and also started separating “the tares from the wheat”; by allowing Satan to have his man come into authority in the Philadelphian Organization after the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, who was the “angel” or Pastor General to the Philadelphian Horn of Christ. Satan took control of that organization and corrupted it; by perverting the truth, and having the ministers cast out those of us who stood up for the truth. You should also read my article titled: WHO OR WHAT CAUSED THE FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH IN GOD’S CHURCH: You can find it at truecog.com

Out of the entire ministry; in the year 1989 one minister and his assistant had the faith and courage to stand up for the truth, and warn the top leaders to repent of their departure from the true and right way. Satan's ministers fired him, and cast him out of that organization. That organization was no longer God's organization. The Philadelphian organization was turned into a synagogue of Satan. It was not God's organization any longer, even though many of the true members of Christ's body were still assembling with them. Some of us didn't know where to go, but we knew that this church ministry was going astray from Christ. Many of the brethren had just spiritually gone to sleep, and didn't seem to care that the truth was being perverted. They had just relaxed and assumed that it was safe to just look to the ministers, and follow them in whatever they taught and did. They trusted that the ministers would always direct them rightly.

Those of us who were more spiritually awake; we were hurt and angry at the evil that they were doing against Christ and his truth, and his church, but we didn't know of any other place to go where the true doctrines of Christ were taught. Satan had conquered that whole organization, and the ministers were afraid of losing their jobs and paychecks; if they stood up for the truth; so they didn't for several more years.

Since that organization, had been turned away from God, and became a synagogue of Satan; therefore God used the one ordained minister who had faith and courage enough to stand up for the truth to raise up the seventh Horn of Christ, which is Laodicea. This new Laodicean organization became a sanctuary to all those faithful brethren who truly loved the true doctrines of Christ. Gerald Flurry was the messenger or pastor which Christ now held in his right hand to raise

up and lead the Laodicean Horn of Christ. The work that Christ began using him and this group of brethren to do, was reaching out to all of our brethren in the old organization which had been turned into a synagogue of Satan; and trying to wake them up to see the evil being done against Christ and his saints in that organization; and inviting them to join us in this new organization of God's Church, where Christ's doctrines were still being respected and taught.

Mr. Flurry could not imagine himself as being the *"angel" to the Church of the Laodiceans* at that time; so even though Christ had used him to start this new organization of the Church of God, he convinced himself and many of us *for a few years*; that since the brethren of this new church organization was the remnant of the Philadelphia Church Era who had held on to the true doctrines; we therefore are the Philadelphia Church of God, living in the Laodicean Era. Flurry as well as the rest of us in the PCG at that time had mistakenly thought that the World Wide Church of God was turned into the Laodicean Church. Later I have come to understand that the WCG organization and government under Joseph Tkach's satanic leadership, was definitely not one of Christ's horns: but it was turned into a synagogue of Satan. Later I have come to understand that this new organization that Christ raised up using Gerald Flurry in his right hand; was in fact the Laodicean Horn of Christ.

This Laodicean Church Organization did not start out nearly as bad as it later came to be. Brethren, understand this: Jesus Christ did not start out the Laodicean horn with a spiritually blind and naked, lukewarm leader who must be rejected, and "spewed out of his mouth". At first Mr. Flurry as well as the rest of us was excited, and glad to be together again with brethren who still loved the true doctrines and ways of

Christ. We aroused many of our brethren who were still fellowshiping in the synagogue of Satan, and many of them started coming out of that synagogue of Satan and joining back up with those of us who were holding fast to Christ's doctrines. This Laodicean Organization began to grow and prosper: Satan saw this and came after the leader of this church also. Mr. Flurry allowed himself to become blinded by his new wealth and power. He began to start looking at himself in similar manner as did Lucifer; and he became vain and proud of himself. He began trusting in his own imagination to be the word of God. He began to interpret the scriptures out of his own imagination, instead of letting the Holy Bible interpret its own self. More and more false teachings began to be taught as he twisted and interpreted the scriptures out of his own vain imagination. Much false teaching was being published in his booklets and magazines.

Some of the brethren in the church could see that Flurry was teaching things that were obviously not true according to the written word of God. Flurry began exalting himself and proclaiming himself to be a prophet. Later he began to claim he was "*that prophet*" which is referring to Jesus Christ. When any of the brethren confronted him about his false teachings and self exaltations which were numerous; he would disfellowship them unless they were willing to bow under to him and accept his errors. Not only was this man spiritually blinded by his vain glory, and vain imagination; but his attitude and actions toward the brethren who still loved the plain truth of God and Christ, became evil. He became a tyrant in his effort to hang on to his tithe payers. He divided many family members from their families by his fearful control tactics. He desperately didn't want any of the more alert, and wise

brethren to wake up any of the rest of his followers. He was becoming more and more spiritually blind and spiritually naked (*unrighteous*).

Brethren, I hope you all understand that I am not trying to just assonate Mr. Flurry's character and name, but I do need to write these things to make the truth plain, and clear to all of God's people, and even to Mr. Flurry himself. He assonated his own name and character when he started trusting in himself instead of God and his true word.

Because of this unrighteousness in the Laodicean messenger or pastor; many faithful brethren have left or been disfellowshipped from that organization of the church. Because the Messenger to the Church of the Laodiceans has gone off course and has exalted his own self and his own imaginations, and cast out the faithful saints; therefore he cannot be used as a mouth to speak for Christ. Jesus Christ has rejected him and spewed him out of his mouth. Flurry did not altogether reject the doctrines of Christ as did the synagogue of Satan, but he is not truly on track with Christ either; he is neither totally right nor totally wrong in what he teaches. Christ says he is neither Cold nor hot, and is therefore unacceptable. He must choose to repent, humble himself, and get right with God and Christ or go on and be rejected as completely wrong. The great tribulation may help with this. Indications are that he may repent when he is buying of Christ the true Gold that is tried in the fire. (*Rev. 3: 18*) God does chasten every son that he loves. That may not be pleasant; but it is good that God loves us that much, and does not want us to fail his grace.

As a result of the false teaching and self exaltation of the Laodicean messenger; the rest of the body of Christ which finally began to wake up and leave the synagogue of Satan would not even consider joining

up with that organization. If Gerald Flurry had been completely faithful to the Word of God, and lived humbly before God, and before the rest of the body of Christ, and taught only according to the plain truth of God's Word; I personally believe that eventually most of the truly converted and faithful brethren would have come into that organization, under his leadership: But since he became vain and trusted in his newfound carnal wealth, and trusted in himself to interpret the word of God, and refuses to be reprov'd; therefore Jesus Christ, our Head has spewed him out of his mouth; and so also *Christ in us*, has led most of us, *the body of Christ*, to rejected him from being our leader and teacher. The work of Christ using him to re-gather the body of Christ into the new church organization has ceased.

The body of Christ is scattered all over this earth and in many different groups; and many of us are not completely allied with any particular group. We each are being tested individually whether we will live humbly and honestly according to the true Word of God; or whether we will follow some vain imaginations in our own minds, or maybe even follow some other man's vain imaginations. Those of us, who will be in that number, (144000) "*when the saints go marching in*", will be those who follow **the Lamb** wherever he goes. (Rev. 14: 1-5) He is our Head. If we are very careful, we can learn from each other that are being led by Christ; but Jesus is ultimately the one that we must follow and obey, if we desire to be a member of his kingdom.

Brethren, remember, and understand this: Just because we live in the Laodicean Era of God's church, does not mean that we have to be like the "*angle*" to the Church of the Laodiceans; spiritually poor, spiritually blind, and spiritually naked. We also don't have to be "lukewarm"; we can be yielded to Christ, and dedicated to following

the true Word of God; and excited about our hope in God's family and Kingdom. Jesus Christ tells this Era of true Christians that if we, (*even as scattered individuals*), overcome; we shall sit with him on his throne, even as he also overcame and is sitting with his father on his throne. Notice also brethren that Jesus did overcome; but he never sinned. He overcame the pulls of the flesh, and the pulls of Satan and his society. Likewise we also must overcome the influences of Satan and his society, as well as our own sinful human nature. Part of our overcoming also has to do with overcoming the deceptive leadership of the many false teachers and preachers in this Laodicean Age.

Conclusion

Now brethren, after we have considered the above information; it should be obvious that the Laodicean Era of God's church is **continuing** in this scattered condition because there is not a faithful and honest pastor in Christ's right hand to lead this Era of Christ's sheep back into one fold. There are many self-serving vain men who are trying to gather the church together under their own personal control; but they are not instruments in Christ's right hand. This scattered condition shows that Christ's "sheep" are scattered when there is not a "shepherd" in Christ's right hand to provide the necessary leadership. This also is witness that Jesus Christ did have his government in his Philadelphian Church to keep us all united and on track doctrinally; so that we could all be called into an organization which would feed us, and lead us in the truth until we were mature enough to be tried and tested to see if we will remain on track when the "shepherd is taken away. Presently there is no man under Christ that is rightly leading the Laodicean Era of God's Church. The Leader of the Laodicean Church

has been spewed out of Christ's mouth; therefore we all must not look to that man any longer, but **look to Jesus Christ and his written word.** We had better be careful though, lest we deceive our own selves, by trusting in our own imaginations as does the Laodicean Messenger who was spewed out. Satan will also try to come into our own minds to plant wrong and deceptive thoughts. We must stand guard in our own minds. God help each of us who truly does love the true Word of God and his gospel.

Brethren, God has been allowing this corruption in the leadership of the church which has produced this scattering of the saints; so that each of us may be individually tested and proved whether we will follow Christ, even if we must stand all alone, or whether we would compromise with the truth, just to fit in with a group of people, and thereby have favor and support of men. God also wants us to see ourselves as he sees us. Often times we have to fail in order for us to be able to see and acknowledge our own weaknesses, and repent while there is still time. If we are willing our failures can be used as stepping stones to greater success. We should pray for all of God's Church members, even those who have wronged us; that they may be able to see, acknowledge, and repent of their sins: and do not judge to condemn them. We who did not go astray doctrinally should consider the "*prodigal son's*" brother and his attitude, lest we be like him. Christ does gladly welcome back his straying children when they truly repent. So should we.

Eventually in this end time generation, God will provide some powerful leadership for his people in times of great tribulation. God will give power to his choice of leaders and witnesses for him; which the whole world will be forced to acknowledge. I have written an

article on this subject also, which I hope you will take time to read. The article can be found on my web-site, *truecog.com* under Literature. The title of this article is: THE WORK OF GOD'S TWO WITNESSES. I am not claiming to be one of the two witnesses, but I do believe that God has given me a good understanding of the purpose for which God will give great power to those two men. I find God's purpose for those two men to be very good and wonderful; giving hope to many of this earths people.

I will close this writing and pray that all of God's true saints may have an abundance of Christ's Spirit and character in us, so that we have the love, faith, and courage to be faithful to Christ even unto death, for we may be called on to glorify God and Christ in our bodies in that manner. I don't believe those days are far off.

Your brother in Christ,

Gary Stowers

