

# WHO OR WHAT CAUSED THE FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH IN GODS CHURCH?

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This letter is sent to the scattered flock of Gods true church that is following Christ and not a man, nor an organization. Because of the nature of the manner in which we were scattered, we most often don't even know who, or where the rest of us scattered sheep are. Believe it or not, that is a part of Gods plan and purpose to refine, and test us, and to help prepare us for our responsibilities in the soon coming kingdom of God. Remember Elijah the prophet; he thought he was the only one left in Israel that still loved God and his truth, but God told him that he had seven thousand men reserved who had not bowed their knees to Baal. We do not know the number, but likewise in our generation God has faithful brethren scattered all over this earth who still love the plain truth of God's word.

We are skeptical of who we can trust, because of so many wolves out there wearing sheep's clothing. The answer is that God doesn't want us to put our trust in any man, but look to the written word of God and trust in him. When it comes to putting your faith and trust in men, Gods Word tells us to consider that all men could be liars, but God is always true. (Romans 3: 4). What this means is that we must be proving all things by making sure that anything that we accept into our minds as fact is in complete agreement with the word of God. If it doesn't fit perfectly, then don't accept it. If a minister has to interpret it according to his own ideas, and it don't truly fit with all of the other scriptures on that subject. Then don't accept it. It doesn't matter how high of a rank the minister has, Gods Word

is of much higher rank! This is the difference between following men and following God, and Christ. False ministers don't like this; they would have you just trust and believe them. Oh, some will hypocritically make statements like: "don't just believe me, but prove it for yourself," but if you don't find them to be right, they are ready to cast you out of their church! This is where it takes "guts" and courage, and faith in God and his Word to stand up for the truth! If we don't stand up for the truth, then we are denying Christ. If we deny Christ before men, then He will deny us before the Father; (Matt. 10: 33). This doesn't mean that true and faithful Christians should try and force the truth off on the ministers but rather they should simply believe in, and teach the truth to their own families who are willing to believe the truth, even if it means getting put out of the organization, or I might add, even if it gets you killed!

As you well know, the days of great persecution will come. We should let Christ live in us and guide our behavior, and thoughts so that God may count us worthy to escape this time of tribulation, but be willing to die for the truth even if God doesn't deliver us from it. Remember brethren, many righteous men and women of past ages did suffer martyrdom. Going to a place of safety or saving our skin is not our main goal, but being faithful to the Word of God! If you are faithful to the Word of God, then God will see to it, that you will be in the place that God wants for you during the tribulation, whether it is a skin safe place, or if God chooses for you like many others have already experienced, to glorify God in your body by death. To have this kind of an attitude we must really believe Gods Word and Love him, and his philosophy of life, which is the way of LOVE, more than anything else even our own life. If we don't, then we are not qualified to help rule in the Kingdom of God any way. Remember Brethren God has not called us in this age just so that we might selfishly GET salvation. We are called to be kings and priest to re-educate the rest of mankind, so that they also may come to know God and his wonderful, loving way of life, which will lead to real peace and happiness, and fulfillment of purpose, and hope.

Now let us get to the truth about what happened in the World Wide Church of God and who is responsible for the division, and perversion of the truth. A lot of people in the Laodicean church which calls its self the Philadelphia Church of God,

and a lot of people who followed other ministers out of that church to form their own churches like to lay most of the blame on Mr. Tkach and other high ranking ministers, but they weren't the cause. Satan the devil gladly attacked the truth, and God's saints; but these Satan influenced men were used by God to expose a very big problem in the church to the people themselves. Now let's examine a few things that we may come to the right conclusion concerning this matter.

First of all Mr. Tkach was appointed to his high office by Gods inspiration upon Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Remember, Mr. Armstrong originally thought that the best way to protect the church from wolves after his death was to appoint a council of Elders who would choose the next pastor general of the church. This would have made the new pastor general subject to the council of elders. They would have had the power to depose him if he abused his office. Looking at things from our human point of view, that seems to make a lot more sense, But God sees things from a different Perspective as we have noticed.

Second: understand that Mr. Tkach was not just acting on his human ideas, but was merely a tool in Satan the devils hands. Satan didn't somehow overpower God and Christ and thus force his way into the Church of God. God allowed Satan to come into a high ranking position of the church. God could have stopped him at any time. God turned Satan loose on the church just like he turned Satan loose on Job. The question is; why? Some people will say, well there was no Mr. Armstrong around to put things back on track, like he did after the seventies rebellion. Mr. Armstrong was not the only man in our age who truly loves God and his truth. God could have inspired Mr. Armstrong to have chosen a man whom God had prepared and knew would be faithful to lead the church, but he didn't. Again we should ask; why? God knew the spirit of this worldly age of people, and God knew from the beginning of the church what the average person in the World Wide Church of God would be like, concerning their attitude toward being faithful to him or not; so God told us in Revelation chapter three what the works of the Philadelphian and Laodicean Churches would be like. God found it necessary to reveal the plain unleavened truth of our character to us, by letting Satan loose on us to test our faith and our resolve about being faithful to the

Word of God; so that the church might see for their own selves what their weaknesses are, and where their real devotion is dedicated to.

Third: Understand that God knows what is in the deepest part of our heart. I am certain that God was not surprised that Mr. Tkach did what he did. God knows the end from the beginning! God knows us much better than we know our own selves. We may deceive ourselves into believing that we are pure in heart, and totally in agreement with God, but God is not fooled. God knew that the majority of the Church of God WAS NOT GETTING IT! That is why God repeatedly inspired Mr. Armstrong to tell us “brethren I don’t think you are getting it!” The majority of the church seemed puzzled that he would say something like that. In their minds they thought something like; Oh, yes I am getting it, and I am behind you one hundred percent. Some even said a hundred and ten percent. It was just like it was when Moses gathered the children of Israel together and told them what would befall them after his death in Deuteronomy chapters 31, and 32. I doubt that they believed him when he told them that they would utterly corrupt their selves after his death. (Deut. 31: 29) I doubt that the church and its ministry believed Mr. Armstrong either, but now we all know the record.

The people would say in their heart, if not in words; I keep the Sabbath, I keep all of the Holy Days, and I understand the basic doctrines of the church, and I try to keep the Ten Commandments, I show love to the brethren, especially the ones of my own click. We have people over to our house for dinner and fellowship. I serve as deacon at the feast, and the ministers could consider all of the good sermons that they have given. Why, who is to say I don’t get it!

God could not persuade a people like this with words that they weren’t getting it. But by the same token God couldn’t give eternal life and all of the power that he plans to give to the saints to a people that God knew were not DEEPLY converted. To give eternal life to people whom God knew would depart from the truth if their ministers and those around them turned away would not be a blessing at all, but a major curse! That would be like sentencing them to the fate of the demons. That would defeat Gods whole purpose of making man out of flesh, subject to death if he rebels.

The ministers would never have been persuaded by words that their jobs, rank, homes, cars, prestige and good names in the eyes of their peers and brethren were more important to them than the Word of God. So God decided to use Satan to reveal their own hearts to their own self. Mr. Tkach began forcing false doctrines off on the church and demoted men of their rank and position in the church if they didn't support the false teachings, and many of us were disfellowshipped because we withstood this satanic attack, and held on to the truth, and tried to warn other brethren not to accept these false teachings.

God used the one minister who openly refused to accept their false doctrines, Mr. Gerald Flurry to start the seventh Era or Horn of Christ's Church. Those of us who were awake and loved the truth, and hated the evil work that they were doing; we came into the PCG under Mr. Flurry's leadership. Satan came after the leader of that church also, and as a result many of us were cast out of that organization also. Some brethren may have just left to avoid false teaching, and some of those in that church were also only tares.

Meanwhile, the majority of the brethren in the WCG seemed to be asleep to what was really going on. Some noticed that things was not right, but they were deceived into thinking that God would set things right in time if they just stayed in there and kept their mouths shut lest they would be cast out. *(One point that I need to interject in here is; that even if you are only a lowly lay member in the body of Christ: If you see evil being taught and done in the Church that is against Christ and his saints, and you keep your mouth shut, and refuse to warn your brethren; then you are guilty also of not having proper love for the rest of the body of Christ; and how much more so, the ministers who are supposed to be good shepherds.)* The ministers and many brethren feared what they might lose in this world more than they loved the truth of God, so they did like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They chose to take sides with Satan, and reject the truth. Some were unconverted and deceived, but many knew what they were doing! What a sad shame! They feared man instead of God. Read what Jesus said in Matt. 10: 28; "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

After a few years of this perversion of truth, and Spiritual suicide those ministers who were going along with Satan's lies began to lose their worldly treasures anyway, because the church began to suffer huge financial problems as a result of this evil work. So some of the ministers got together and gathered a group of church members together who were dissatisfied with the continual perversion of the churches doctrines and left the World Wide Church organization and formed their own churches. This way at least they would have a body of people to pay tithes to them, thus supporting them. Some or maybe all of them profess to have repented of their evil, some will not acknowledge it, but can God trust such cowardly and fearful men to rule in his kingdom? Men who have turned their backs on God and his truth and cast out those of us who loved the truth? God only knows, he is the judge, but I will say this; if they would turn tail and run from God because of the persecution of that time; there is a much greater persecution that awaits them in the near future! We also need to understand that the organizations that these men formed are not one of the seven Horns or governments of Christ. As I have shown you in my booklet, "Just what do you mean Church Eras"; the faithful Christians of this Age are scattered, and feeding themselves on the true word of God. Some few may still be fellowshiping with the Laodicean Church, The PCG, or even with a synagogue of Satan, but if they are at all, trying to be faithful to Christ, they must be keeping quit about their real beliefs. They are enduring a lot of lies and false teachings also, which is dangerous to their selves and their families.

Yes God has used Satan influenced men to try, and test Gods people; whether they truly love the word of God and his way of life, and as Mr. Armstrong said; they weren't getting it! By not getting it they were not deeply in love with the truth, even though they had it and understood it to a certain degree. They were not truly converted. That is deeply converted. The Word of God was not the most important thing in their lives. How about us? Just because some of us have not been guilty of departing from the truth and following men does not mean that we can sit back smugly and condemn others and think that we have it made! Remember, God knows our hearts better than we know our selves. Some brethren will yet suffer martyrdom. Do we love God and his way of love enough

to suffer pain and death and remain faithful? I hope so. If we are to remain faithful to God we must pray a lot so that God is more real to us than this physical world and our own flesh. We must also practice the way of love in all our dealings with other people. To the degree that we are willing to practice Gods love in our lives, God will fill us with his Holy Spirit. We can have all knowledge, have understanding of prophecy, and keep all Holy Days and the Sabbath, and preach to others, and if we are not filled with the love of God, then we are still nothing. Being filled with the love of God, by the Holy Spirit, and letting it flow out to all others in our conduct is what makes us Christian. Whatever is not of love is sin. So we all have plenty to repent of every day. If we will remain humble and compare ourselves with Christ's example instead of comparing ourselves with other brethren, then there is hope for us. Men who will be a "big shot" in this world and exalt themselves, God will abase and expose their foolishness to all. There are a lot of offices available in the Kingdom of God for humble men, but there is no room for "big shots." We have to look deep into our heart of hearts and see this vanity and repent of it, for all humans have acquired some of it. If we confess our sins God is gracious to forgive us, but if we say we have none in us, then our sin remains.

Remember; God is, and was in supreme control above all, but he allowed Satan to come into the Church of God, even as God will allow Satan to be released from prison and come out to deceive the people who have lived during the millennium and to test them. (Rev. 20:7-10) Mr. Tkach didn't cause the people to turn away from the truth. They did that because they didn't love the truth enough to hold on to it even if they were cast out of the organization for it. Mr. Tkach gave his self over to Satan, as did Judas and was used by God to expose to the brethren understanding, that the majority of the Church wasn't truly getting it. Our love for God and his truth and way of love must be the most important thing in our lives; otherwise we will not hold on to it faithfully when facing trial and strong temptation.

Now consider the parable that Christ gave about the tares that were sown among the wheat; (Matt. 13: 24-30), and (Matt. 13: 36-44). You should read and study this parable, then read again and consider what I have to say here about it.

The wheat is the true followers of Christ. The tares are people whom Satan has planted in among the true Christians. There have been false brethren among the Church throughout all ages of the church, but this parable seems to be focused mostly on the end time church age, because Christ said that he would let the tares remain among the church until the end of the world. This was to keep from the true Christians being uprooted also when their ministers and brethren which were only tares or weeds would be uprooted. Now we know that when Christ returns to earth in Glory and power, the faithful followers of Christ will rise up to meet him in the air, (I Thes. 4: 15-18). But before this rising to meet Christ takes place; Christ will have his angles gather together the tares into “bundles”, to eventually be burned. What would you call a bundle of people who profess to be Christians? CHURCHES! Don't you find it interesting that it is the tares that are gathered in bundles instead of the wheat? Christ will gather the wheat into his barn later, but first the reapers will gather the tares into bundles.

Are we not living in the end of this world even now? Is this not taking place now? Since the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong God has been testing his people as to, who really loves the truth, and who just has it but are willing to depart from it for the cares of this fleshly life, and in order that they may remain among their congregations of peers, and not have their names slandered, as if they were departing from Christ. We have been tested as to who is truly following Christ, and who are following a man or men, or an organization. The leaders of these bundles of tares have been driving out the wheat by their false teachings and self exaltations. These self declared apostles and prophets of these bundles have been fighting among their selves, over who is the greatest, and who will get the most of the scattered sheep to come in their organization, so that in turn they may enrich their own selves. But they will cast out and reject any of the faithful brethren who hold to the truth and don't support their false teachings, and self exaltations. When it is finally finished, what will be left in these church organizations, or bundles will be only tares and apostates! Many of these people were actually called of God, but they didn't love the truth enough to remain faithful. It is as if they have cross pollinated with the Tares, and now are producing the fruits of the tares. The wheat, or true Christians are scattered all



over the face of the earth, but they are the ones that are really in Gods Church, for they are being led by the Holy Spirit, and are following Christ. We never dreamed that there were so many tares among the wheat until we see this separation taking place! God's faithful saints are few and scattered, and this has been the case in most of the church eras. Just to look with our fleshly eyes, one would have thought the bride of Christ would be made up of millions of people. But when Christ has his feet planted on mount Sion again there will only be 144000 first fruits with him. (Rev. 14: 1-5) That is from all age's brethren!

Now consider the last Horn of Christ; that is the last or seventh organization of the first fruits Church of God. God foretold from the beginning of the church that the Laodicean Horn would become spiritually blind and naked. They would have enough truth and righteousness to be considered lukewarm, but they would have so much deception and unrighteousness mixed in that they were not hot.

Could not God have chose a man to lead this end time horn of the church that would not covet to be a "big shot", and make himself a "prophet", so that the church would be led only into truth, and exalting only God, instead of a man? Obviously not, if he had decided that it must be one of the ordained ministers; for none had the faith, courage and guts to stand up for the Word of God and His saints, and risk being disfellowshipped from the church organization. They seem to have forgotten that we were called by God into the truth, and the body of Christ, which is a spiritual organism, and not just into the physical organization. God could have prepared a special man with complete faith in Christ and complete love for the truth, and complete courage to take over the leadership of the church, but he didn't. Why? When the people have a strong, righteous leader, they follow along and appear even to themselves to be following Christ, as was the case when Mr. Armstrong was still alive. In similar manner was the case when Moses was still alive and leading Israel. But, understand this: God doesn't want a people to help rule and educate the world tomorrow who would need a strong righteous leader to keep them "on track". He wants a people who are so converted to God, and our Lord Jesus Christ that we will stand firm in the truth, and nothing but the truth, even if we are all by our self! If there is no one else

who will agree with us except God, and Christ; then we will still faithfully continue in the true and right way, because we deeply love it! That is true conversion.

My brethren, we need not underestimate the power of the devil to hit us in our weakest area of character. If we think that we could have done a better job of leading the Church of God than Mr. Flurry, we may not have considered our own weaknesses that Satan would attack us in. Satan will strike hardest at the leader of God's Church so that he may be able to better conquer many brethren. Pride and vanity, and any assortment of fears are areas that Satan will capitalize on, to start us in a wrong direction. Humility and love for the bottom line truth, as well as love for God and all of our brethren must be at the core of our hearts if we are to have any chance of overcoming Satan and his evil vices. Even if we have let Satan seduce us into some sin; remember, being honest and truthful about it, and complete repentance is the only way to get free from Satan's strangle hold on us. Some people are too ashamed and fearful to be truthful and honest; and this is just where Satan wants to get you.

Yes, even this Laodicean Church leadership is being used to separate and divide the truly, and deeply converted saints from those people who feel the need to have a "minister" or "prophet", and an organization of people to lean on. Those who overcome in this Laodicean Age will have to overcome this dependency of putting their trust in a man or a congregation of people. Those faithful first fruits who will be given eternal life, and power to rule, and teach in the Kingdom of God, will have to be following the Lamb wherever he goes; (*Rev. 14: 4*) and that; not just to get in the kingdom, but because we deeply love Christ and all that he stands for.

I hope you will find this letter of interest and helpful. I pray for all our scattered brethren I hope you do also.

Brethren, I do want to acknowledge that there probably are some small groups of brethren that are being faithful to Christ and his true teachings, but I don't know of any large organization that I could honestly say that they are the true and faithful church of God in this Laodicean Age. I will say this; that if any man is truly serving Christ as a minister of God, he will have love for all of God's saints, and

will not be driving a wedge between brethren to separate them, for his own selfish gain, but will seek to unit God's faithful, and provoke them to love one another. As Jesus said, **"BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DECIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE, ONE FOR THE OTHER"**. Too many of these false Apostles, and false Prophets are teaching the brethren to shun and reject, and in effect hate all of the brethren that will not be a part of his flock. Brethren, this evil is not from God! These false apostles preach about Christ's soon coming, yet they are building their empire in this world, with the brethrens tithes and offerings. These false ministers also wring out the money out of the brethren, beside their tithes and offerings. A true servant of God is not covetous of money, or vain glory. A true servant of Christ is dedicated to helping, and serving the flock for their profit, not seeking anything for self, but trusting God to give him his reward in due season.

Brethren, I am not an ordained minister; that is ordained by men, but all of us whom God has called and converted, were called to be saints, kings, and priests to help Christ, to re-educate and rule the people of the whole world when Christ comes back. Any man who has been called during Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's leadership of God's church, and who has been truly converted to love Christ and his people, and truly love the plan of God's salvation; should be capable of serving as a minister to help refresh the brethren by the Spirit and word of God. I don't need a flattering title, to serve Christ and his body, which is the true, converted Church of God. God will give me the new name that he wants for me to be recognized by when we are finally born again into the family of God. Brethren we should all be like that; flattering titles are to feed the vanity of the carnal spirit; it is enough for us to be given the Spirit of our great God and his son, Christ. Whoever is deeply in love with the truth of God and are led by the Spirit of God, and are faithful to stand up for the truth and live by it; they are the ones who are ordained by God to serve as kings and priest in the world tomorrow. We have a responsibility to edify, educate, and refresh our brethren, especially in these evil times when the ministry has gone astray and even persecuted God's faithful saints. Hopefully many of those ministers have, and will repent and turn to God

in humble submission, and let God and his word correct them, so that they may yet be allowed to serve in the family and kingdom of God.

Brethren, if you will stop and analyze it, you will discover that the division of God's church continuing through this age is basically caused by men's vanity and covetousness. Vanity causes men to exalt themselves, like Lucifer did. When their self opinion of their self is so great, they become so blind that they can't even see or admit to their vanity. They expect others to see their selves as they see themselves. Some others who are fearful, or also covetous of a high office or money or vain glory, will feed the vanity of these vain false apostles and prophets, and will accept their false opinion of their selves. It reminds me of the children's story book about the king who was deceived into thinking he was clothed in a splendid and glorious robe; when in reality he was completely naked! In the story it took an honest and humble little child to declare the truth, that the king was naked. Then the king knew that his suck-up staff was lying to him. In like manner it is with these false apostles and false prophets; and it takes a humble child of God who is honest and desires only the truth and not a bunch of vanity; to tell these false leaders that they are spiritually blind and naked, and that they are trusting in vanity, and that they need to repent and humble themselves before God and the brethren, and be corrected, so that they may actually get right with God, and be able to truly serve Christ and his saints with humble, honesty, and truth. The sad part is brethren, that they most likely will not repent, and allow their selves to see what they are behaving like until they are in the midst of the greatest time of suffering and pain, and shame that this world has ever experienced.

Brethren, we may not be ministers, prophets, or apostles, but I am convinced that we all are subject to this kind of vanity and pride that Satan is using to control these leaders. We all should take a good hard honest look at our own self, and repent of any vanity that we have in us. Remember, by vanity Lucifer began to be turned into Satan (Isaiah 14 and Ezek. 28), and likewise, vanity is a major tool that Satan uses to corrupt people, even the called children of God. And what is worse, **who can know it?** Only God can truly show it to us if we desire to see it, so that we may truly repent of it. Read what God inspired the Prophet Jeremiah

to write: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: **and who can know it?**”(Jeremiah 17: 9) Satan causes people not to want to honestly seek to see the unflattering truth about self. Satan influences self to hide from the truth, cover up the truth, and flatter self with vain imaginations of self. Satan causes people, even those called to be Christians to live in a fantasy world inside their own minds, instead of the plain unleavened truth about self. That was one of the reasons that the Jews hated Christ was because, with the truth he stripped them of their cloak that they hid behind. (John 15: 22)

Brethren, when we see this evil of vanity in our self; we should not hide from it; but examine our self more thoroughly; and repent before God, and correct our self. If we have wronged other people, or taught wrongly, then it is also our responsibility before God and the body of Christ to openly acknowledge our sins and change, that we may gain favor with God and our brethren. How could we be honest and faithful witnesses of God and Christ unless we let the Spirit of God correct us of our own faults and weaknesses? I hope this letter is of help to the body of Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

Gary Stowers