

THE AMBASSADOR COLLEGE  
**Bible**  
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



**Why the  
Church?**

# WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY

“Thank you for Lesson 14. I have just finished copying down the scriptures. You may be sure I enjoyed doing them. These 75-year-old fingers are sort of crooked and achy with arthritis, but all that writing didn’t hurt them.”

— M.S., Tateville, Kentucky

“I’m working on Lesson 16. It’s so interesting I don’t want to stop to eat. I stop because my back starts aching. This Bible study is so fantastic. You make it all so easy to understand.”

— R.F., Citrus Heights, California

“I am in the process of doing your Bible course. I have finished six lessons, and can hardly pull myself away from them. I have done many Bible study courses from other organizations, but yours is the best. My mind seems to open up and draw in the knowledge like a sponge. I sit and review what I have studied and the logic of it is amazing. It’s like the scriptures say—the veil over my eyes that kept me blind has been lifted.”

— L.P., Stewiacke, Nova Scotia

“I am starting on Lesson 10 of your Bible correspondence course. The answers to the questions are taken directly from the Bible. I’ve learned much about God and God’s Work since starting this study course. I know now that I am heading in the right direction and sometime in the near future I hope to be rebaptized.”

— L.S., Cincinnati, Ohio

“The Bible correspondence course is outstanding. It’s the most wonderful experience of my life. It’s a pity I had to wait 71 years to have the privilege of really enjoying and understanding the Bible. Please accept my donation; the course is worth a hundred times this amount.”

— R.J., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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## THE AMBASSADOR COLLEGE Bible CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

### Lesson 19

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## About Our Cover . . .

Our cover shows a crowd of churchgoers leaving a church building after Sunday morning services somewhere in the United States. But why do people go to church? Many admit they do so out of habit, or simply as their “Christian duty.” Some go for the “children’s sake.” Others attend for the social contact because it is “good for business.” Regardless of the reasons, few have thought about what the church really is, or what purpose it serves. This lesson gives the why and wherefore of the one and only Church of the Living God!

H. Armstrong Roberts

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# WHAT and WHY the CHURCH?

*The Western world has taken the existence of churches for granted. WHY and by WHOM was the institution of the church founded? What is its PURPOSE? The answers to these questions are vital to the fulfillment of God's Master Plan!*

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**T**HE average person believes that a church is a building with a steeple on top and a cross on its facade. Indeed some dictionaries define it thus. People—at least some—go to this building every Sunday morning to attend a “worship service.”

But for many—and probably most—the church plays no part in their lives. Certainly God plays no part in their lives. God is not consciously in their world—just people, material things and interests. Of course, far back in the subconscious recesses of many minds may lie dormant the supposition that God exists. But He does not seem real to them.

Yet the church, too, does exist. But why? What purpose does it serve?

## Church a Part of God's Plan

There is indeed a purpose being worked out here below. There is a reason for the presence of humanity on the earth, as you have learned in your previous studies. And for the working out of that awesome purpose there is a master plan. God's Church is an important part of that plan!

To understand “*what* and *why* the Church,” we must keep in mind the events that led up to the establishment of the Church. Also, we must not lose sight of *who* and *what* God is—the divine creating Family—and that God is now reproducing Himself through mankind.

Remember that Satan, formerly the cherub



Province of Quebec Film Bureau

**THE CHURCH IS NOT THE BUILDING**—Much painstaking labor has gone into the finely-detailed interiors of many church buildings. No less imposing are the soaring exteriors which inspire the awe of men. Few, however, understand that it is the *people* who compose the “church”!



Wide World

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Lucifer whom God had enthroned on the earth, rebelled against God. Thus the Government of God ceased to be administered on earth. Yet God allowed Satan to remain in power on that throne. God would not remove him from that position until a *successor* had qualified to replace Satan as world ruler, and actually been inducted into office!

Pertinent to the purpose of the Church is what happened upon creation of the first man, Adam. The first human followed the way of Satan, rejecting the rule of the Government of God. The Eternal thus made Adam's decision binding on the whole human race until the restoration of God's government over the earth. Mankind would be allowed to follow the way of Satan for a duration of 6,000 years—until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to *restore* God's government!

During this period, God would specially call and give His Spirit to just a few in order to serve Him in preparation for the coming Kingdom of God. God did choose the nation Israel to be His special people, but He did not promise to give them His Holy Spirit at that time as He gave it to their prophets and a few select others.

This brings us historically to the time of Jesus the Messiah and His founding of the Church of God. But bear in mind that God's purpose is the reproduction of Himself through mankind.

The physical creation of man began with Adam—the *first* man. But the spiritual re-creation

of man began with Jesus Christ—the *second* Adam who qualified to replace Satan as world ruler by proving that He would obey the Government of God and rule the earth by God's law.

### **To Train Future World Rulers**

For Christ to restore God's government over the earth, He will need a qualified and organized staff of God Beings to assist Him in ruling the nations. These will have rejected Satan's false way and proved loyal to the Government and righteous ways of God during their mortal lives.

In God's supreme Master Plan, His Church was designed to *prepare* that dedicated and organized staff of God Beings. The Church, then, is God's instrumentality for His overall purpose of reproducing Himself. Those God has called out of this world into His Church are the spirit-begotten and finally to be born *Family of God* which shall form the ruling Kingdom of God!

Let's study the details as revealed in the Bible. But before you begin, be sure to get your tools for study—a Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil. Look up in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions and write them down. Those who follow this method of Bible study already know how helpful it is in retaining and reviewing the vital truths they learn from God's Word.

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## **LESSON 19**

### **How Satan's World Began**

The Church of God has been called out of this world (II Cor. 6:14-17; Rev. 18:4). But why? What's wrong with the world?

This is a world of awesome progress. Men have gone to the moon and back. Photographs of the surface of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn have been taken. The computer, the jet plane, the space shuttle and countless other marvels of science and technology have been produced.

But this is not only a world of awesome progress, it is also a world of appalling troubles, evils, sorrows, suffering, anguish, violence and war. The world's population is discontented and unhappy. Half of the world is illiterate. Millions live in abject poverty, filth and squalor!

How did the world get this way?

Let's briefly review what we have learned in

previous lessons so we'll better understand the real purpose for God's Church.

First, everything started with God. In the beginning we find two Personages—God and the Word (John 1:1). They had *life*—self-inherent life—with no beginning of days or end of life. Their job or profession was creating. And they had love for each other. They were in perfect agreement.

There also was leadership. God was the leader, and the Word did what God told Him to do.

And God, through the Word who later became Jesus Christ, created the angels and the entire universe, including the earth (Eph. 3:9). God placed the anointed cherub Lucifer on a throne on the earth and put angels under him. But Lucifer and these angels rebelled against the Government of God. They turned to the way of "get" instead of "give," to hate and opposition instead of love; to vanity, coveting, wanting to get; to jealousy, envy,

## AWESOME PROGRESS AMID APPALLING EVILS

Countless marvels of science and technology have been produced as a result of man's ingenuity. Yet, ironically, man has been unable to solve the myriad problems besetting this world.

Photos Left to Right  
Jacques TIZIOU-SYGMA  
Wide World  
Deutsche Presse



rebellion against authority; to competition leading to strife, violence and destruction.

Lucifer and his angels swooped up to heaven in an attempt to knock God off His throne and rule the whole universe instead of just this earth. But they were cast back down to earth. As a result of their rebellion, the earth's surface became ruined and full of darkness.

God then renewed the earth's surface in six days, creating the flora and the fauna—the plants, animals, birds and fish. And He made man on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-31). Man was made to ultimately be born into the God Family. But Adam was not given eternal life at his creation. He only had a temporary, chemical, physical existence. If Adam had taken of the tree of life, he would have eventually been given self-inherent life—self-sustaining, immortal life—from God. How? He would have received the Spirit of God which would have *begotten* him as a spiritual child of God, later to be *born* of God!

Had Adam taken of the tree of life, God would have continued to teach Adam and Eve. They would have received much spiritual knowledge before their first child was born. And the Word, the God of the Old Testament who became Jesus Christ, would have begun inculcating the right attitude in Cain and Abel soon after they were born. When they became adults, they would have taught God's way to their children.

*God could have started the Church right in the Garden of Eden! Satan would have been banished,*

and God would have given Adam the throne of the earth, had he made the right choice.

Adam was on trial in the Garden of Eden to see if he would qualify to replace Satan and rule the entire earth. Adam would have to *reject* Satan's way of living, which was represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Adam made the wrong decision. He ate of the tree of "death." He did not eat of the tree of "life." He therefore did not qualify to replace Satan on earth's throne.

By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam chose the way of self-acquired knowledge. Satan now influenced everything Adam did. It was Satan who influenced Adam, through Eve, to make the wrong decision. It was Satan who influenced Cain to kill Abel. It is Satan, the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), who has been influencing the descendants of Adam and Eve ever since!

Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). This is *Satan's* civilization which he started through the first man Adam when he sinned. It includes this world's false education, its false religions, its system of governments and economies, and its social customs.

**1.** Is Satan the prince of the power of the air? Eph. 2:2.

COMMENT: As prince of the power of the air, Satan broadcasts his *attitudes* of selfishness and vanity, of competition and strife. Satan's broadcasting can be compared to television and radio broadcasting. For example, your radio picks up the electromagnetic waves which radiate from trans-

mitters of various radio stations. The human mind can pick up Satan's "broadcasts" because the human spirit in each individual is "in tune" with the devil's *spiritual* "wavelength"!

When Adam made his decision in the Garden of Eden, he rejected God, the Spirit of God and immortal life. The human spirit in Adam became "tuned in" to Satan's spiritual wavelength from the time he first disobeyed God. And his descendants throughout time and into this twentieth century are still tuned in to Satan's wavelength.

**2.** When Adam made the decision to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, did God then close up the Holy Spirit from Adam and his progeny? Gen. 3:24.

COMMENT: God would not allow Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of life after he sinned. The Holy Spirit was cut off from mankind until God made it available again through Christ, the second Adam—but then *only* to those called of God into His Church, which began on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, and which has continued down through the centuries to this very day. The Holy Spirit will not be poured out on *all* mankind until after Jesus Christ returns (see Joel 2:28). Future lessons of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course will fully explain God's Master Plan of salvation for all of humanity.

## The REAL PURPOSE of the Church

**1.** When did the God Family *decree* that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, would come and pay the penalty of the sins of humanity? Rev. 13:8, last part.

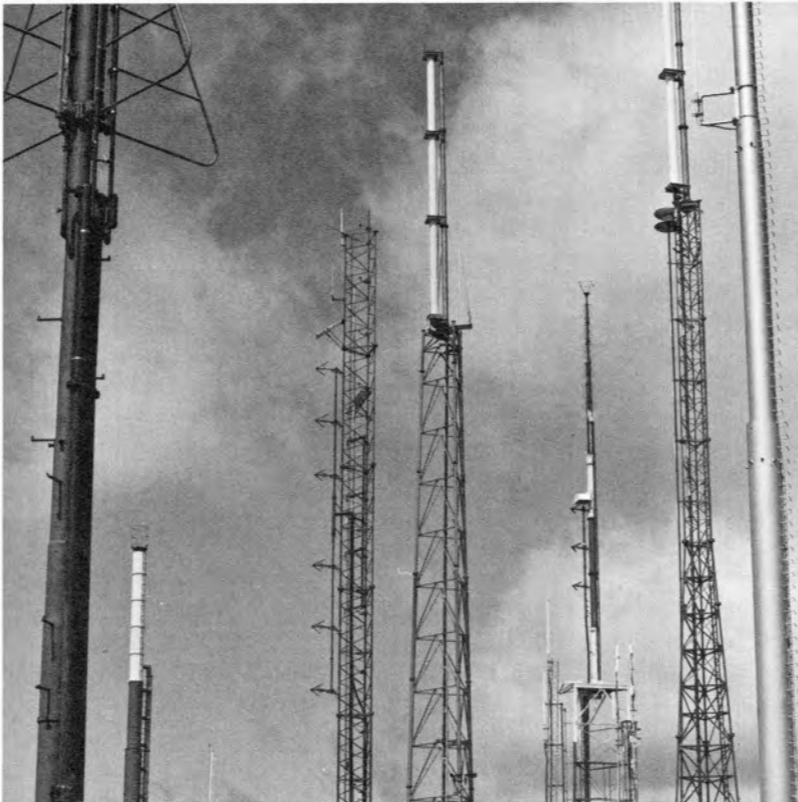
COMMENT: Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world [of Satan]"—that is, it was decreed from the time Adam made the wrong decision that the Lamb of God should die for the sins of all mankind.

**2.** But before Christ could fulfill His mission on earth, did He have to qualify to take over the throne of the earth? Matt. 4:1-11.

COMMENT: Jesus qualified to replace Satan as earth's ruler by overcoming him. He resisted the temptations of the devil after having fasted 40 days and 40 nights.

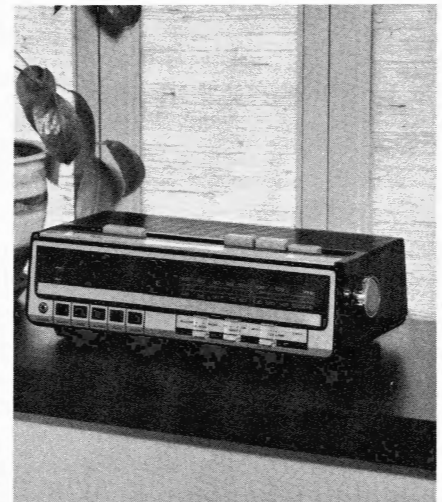
**3.** After qualifying to replace Satan as world ruler, did Jesus then begin preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? Mark 1:13-15. Did He also call disciples so He could teach them personally? Mark 1:16-20; 3:14.

COMMENT: Jesus called His twelve disciples before He started the New Testament Church. A disciple is a student or learner. Christ chose them—they didn't choose Him. He told Simon (Peter) and Andrew his brother: "Come after me,



## "ON THE AIR" 24 HOURS A DAY!

As a radio can be tuned to receive a program being transmitted through the air, the human mind is already "tuned in" to Satan's spiritual "wavelength."



Ambassador College photos

and I will make you . . . fishers of men.”

Jesus taught and trained the twelve disciples so they could become teachers—so He could start the Church around them. The apostles would form part of the *foundation* of the Church. They would be the teachers of those whom God would call into His Church later.

But none became members of the Church until after Jesus had ascended into heaven. Rather, He first called the disciples. Jesus Himself taught them so they could become teachers and members, upon spiritual conversion. When Jesus did start the Church, He already had *trained* teachers.

**4.** Can “whosoever will” now receive God’s Holy Spirit and thereby become a member of God’s Church? John 6:44.

**COMMENT:** No man can come to Christ—except the Spirit of the Father draws him. Jesus did not say “whosoever will may come” now. But the disciples were called and trained so they could teach others whom God would call into His Church.

**5.** On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was opened up—made available—to those God would call into His Church, how many had God already called? Acts 1:15; 2:1-4. How many did God add to the Church on this very same day? Acts 2:41. Did God also add others to the Church daily? Verse 47.

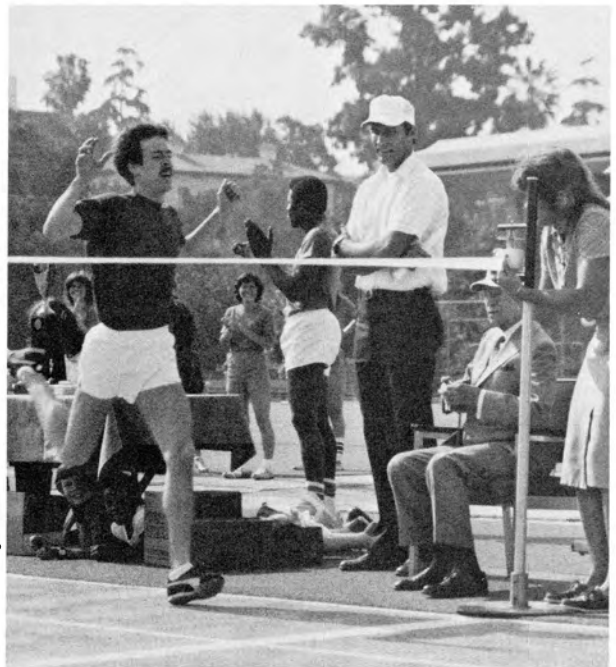
**COMMENT:** About one hundred and twenty became members of God’s Church on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, when they were initially imbued with the Holy Spirit. Another 3,000 were converted later that same day. They were taught by the apostles. During the time of the apostles, the number of converted members continued to multiply and must have eventually increased to a hundred thousand or so—a number the membership of God’s Church is approaching at the time of this writing.

But Jesus Christ will not establish the Kingdom of God on earth until *many more* have been called and taught to become teachers.

**6.** Are the kingdoms (governments) of this world to be ruled by the saints in the World Tomorrow? Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Rev. 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4.

**COMMENT:** *The Church is the Kingdom of God in “embryo”—not yet born. The members are the begotten children of the World Tomorrow! Jesus came to start a new world—a new civilization—through them. They will help Him to rule and teach His way of life when He comes again. Church members are now in training so they can teach the millions and even billions during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period!*

Those who are in God’s Church are now being *taught how to live*. They’re being taught the way to



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**IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING**—Just as an athlete must train diligently to achieve excellence in his sport, so also true Christians are in training for great responsibilities in the World Tomorrow.

build a right society and a right civilization that will be both happy and productive. In the new civilization everybody will cooperate with one another. Everyone will be at peace and will truly enjoy life to the full! Tomorrow’s world will have none of the troubles of Satan’s world today.

**7.** Does God “test” or “try” members who are in training to become tomorrow’s teachers, to determine if they will obey the Government of God as Abraham did (Gen. 26:5)? Ps. 11:4-5; Jer. 17:10; I Peter 4:12-13; James 1:2-4; I Cor. 3:13.

**COMMENT:** Those called into God’s Church have to make a decision as Adam did. They, too, must decide whether or not they will follow God. As they continue to live God’s way, they are tried and tested so God will know that the “heart” of each member is truly turned to God prior to his or her birth into the Family of God.

**8.** What did Christ command Peter, who was to become the leading apostle of the early Church? John 21:15-17.

**COMMENT:** God’s Church today also follows Jesus’ command to “feed my sheep.” The Church has a vast educational program to teach the begotten children of God. This is accomplished through the teaching of members by God’s ministers in weekly Sabbath services and through the Church’s publications. The Worldwide Church of God publishes numerous booklets, this Bible Correspondence

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dence Course you are now studying, *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News* and *Youth* magazines. There is also an organized educational program for the youth of the Church. Then there is “The WORLD TOMORROW” broadcast on television and radio.

These are the major means by which the Church teaches (“feeds”) its members who have been called into God’s Church to become students so they can be taught to become teachers. Teachers must first be taught before they can teach others. God is now, through His Church, teaching teachers to teach the rest of mankind!

The real and awesome purpose of God’s Church is to produce *teachers* of millions (and eventually billions) of people in the World Tomorrow so they, too, may learn the way to become spirit-born members of the God Family!

**9.** In the meantime, did God also command His Church to preach His truth to the world? Matt. 28:19-20. Did Jesus prophesy that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God would be proclaimed to the world as a *witness* before the end of Satan’s world and the ushering in of the World Tomorrow? Matt. 24:3, 14; Mark 13:10.

COMMENT: The Church’s preaching and publishing of Christ’s Gospel to the world is the primary means by which God calls various ones into His Church to be trained. To those millions who hear it, but whom God is not calling at this time, it is merely a witness.

### **The FOUNDATION of the Church**

How and when did Jesus Christ begin the Church of God? In a sense, He started it long ago through the prophets of the Old Testament era. The prophets, together with Jesus and His apostles, constitute the *foundation* of the spiritual House of God which is now being built by Christ. Let’s understand.

**1.** Did Jesus say He would build His Church? Matt. 16:18. What had to occur *before* the New Testament Church could be founded? John 7:37-39.

COMMENT: The spiritual Church could not be founded until Jesus had ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit was sent to be in those the Father had called. Nevertheless, God long ago began calling out a few to form the pre-foundation of the Church, namely Abraham and the other prophets. Perhaps this even includes Abel, Enoch and Noah, for these righteous men undoubtedly were used by God to play some part in the ultimate creation of the Kingdom of God.

But the Eternal began laying the actual *foundation* of that ultimate God Family through the prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph who formed part of that pre-foundation. Through the years from Abraham until Christ, God called His prophets out of Satan’s world to be a part of the pre-foundation of the Church of God.

**2.** Was the congregation of Israel during Moses’ time also called a church? Acts 7:38.

COMMENT: God raised up the nation Israel—the congregation or “church in the wilderness.” The people were given God’s government, but *not* His Holy Spirit! These Israelites were not spiritually begotten to become future God Beings. Yet ancient Israel fulfilled a necessary part in God’s Master Plan, as your studies with Lesson 16 have shown.

**3.** What were the apostles to form along with the prophets? Eph. 2:19-22, especially verse 20. Who is the head of the Church? Eph. 5:23.

COMMENT: During the three and one-half years of Jesus’ earthly ministry, He called out the beginning of the second co-foundation of the Church—twelve apostles. He taught and trained them as He proceeded to do the Work of God.

Jesus built His Church on the foundation of the apostles and the Old Testament prophets, with Jesus Himself being the Head of the Church—the “Chief Cornerstone” of the spiritual Temple of God.

**4.** After having trained the twelve apostles, when did Jesus actually start the Church? Acts 2:1-4.

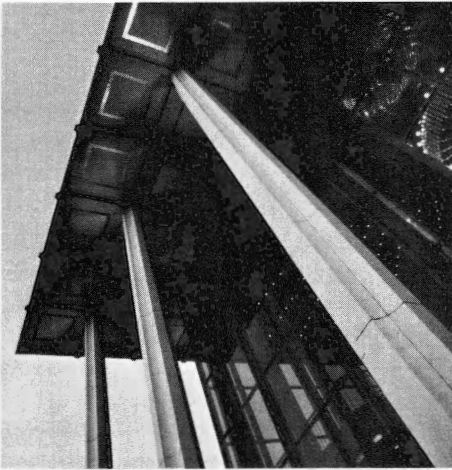
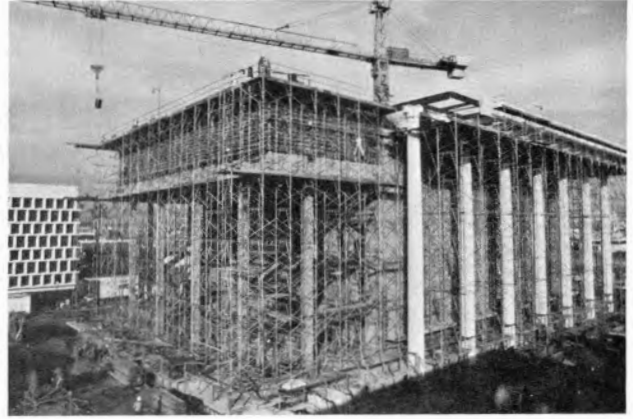
COMMENT: The New Testament Church was founded on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. On that day the “firstfruits” of God’s Kingdom were begotten by God’s Holy Spirit. And it is by God’s Spirit that has resided in all the prophets, apostles and Church brethren that they shall be resurrected (or changed, if still alive) to immortality at Christ’s Second Coming in power and glory!

Thus the whole Church—now the Kingdom of God in “embryo”—constitutes the very *first* of all humans who shall finally be born into the Kingdom of God as God Beings!

**5.** In the spiritual Temple—the Church—which Christ has been building, who will compose the “pillars”? Rev. 3:7, 12.

COMMENT: The pillars of a building have a very important function. Pillars are often major supports for the superstructure of a building. The *Philadelphia* era of God’s Church has proven loyal to God—has not denied Christ and has kept His Word (verse 8). This era has proven to be especially faithful in upholding and teaching God’s truths and way of life to the world.





## AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM

***AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING BUILT ON A FIRM FOUNDATION—LIKE TRUE CHRISTIANS TODAY WHO ARE TO BECOME SPIRITUAL “PILLARS” IN GOD’S HOUSE.***

Located on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena, California, Ambassador Auditorium was built on a deep and very solid foundation (top left). The Bible shows that a spirit-begotten Christian is an integral part of a *spiritual* building—the Church of God being built on the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ, His apostles and prophets!



All photos Ambassador College

When one considers the tremendous amount of spiritual knowledge God has revealed to His apostle of modern times, and the great educational thrust of God's Work today, one might logically conclude that in the World Tomorrow the Philadelphia era of God's Church may form the *educational arm* of God's Kingdom to teach His way of life to the whole world.

This would explain why God has called into His Church people of all ethnic backgrounds from the nations of the world today. As members of the Philadelphia era of God's Church now in training, they will be prepared to teach their own people after Christ returns!

### Government in the Church

The Church—God's spiritual Temple which Christ is building—must be, and *is*, held together solidly. How is this possible? It is *Church government* that cements and welds together the members of the body of Christ so that all function in peace, harmony and unity of purpose!

**1.** Who set government in the Church? I Cor. 12:28.

COMMENT: Ancient Israel, the "Church" or congregation of the Old Testament era, was also a nation in the world, though not *of* the world as God organized it. Its government was hierarchical. It

**AS A GROOM LOVES HIS BRIDE**—so Christ exercises His tender, loving rule over the Church, His affianced Bride.



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was theocratic government—government from the top down—the very opposite of democracy.

Likewise, the Church of God today is organized under theocratic government, hierarchical in form. The members do not set officials in the Church—*God* does, even as He sets the lay members in the Church (I Cor. 12:18; John 6:44; Acts 2:47).

The government presently in God's Church is the same form of government by which Christ shall rule all nations during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period. Those in God's Church today have *voluntarily* placed themselves under the authority of His government. Thus they are learning to rule in the Kingdom of God. How? By first being ruled by the Government of God during their mortal lives. God's begotten children learn to rule in the World Tomorrow by submitting to and administering God's government within His Church today! Let's understand.

**2.** Who is the Head of the Church? Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22-24.

COMMENT: Christ is the Head of the Church even as the husband is the head of the wife. The human family structure is a type of the divine Family of God and is to be governed according to the Law of God which is summed up in the one word *love*. By following the principles of God's government in our families, we are learning how to apply God's way and rightly govern those Christ will place under our rule in the Millennium!

**3.** As Head of the Church, how does Christ rule? Eph. 5:25.

COMMENT: Christ rules the Church—His wife-to-be—in *love*, always doing what is best for her. He loved the Church so much that He died for her so that she could receive forgiveness from sin, and be made immortal at His Second Coming.

Husbands are to submit to Christ and follow His example of love toward their own families. They, too, are to learn to govern in *love*—not as tyrants! Husbands and fathers should rule their households according to God's law—governing for the good of those governed. And wives are to submit to their own husbands as the Church is to submit to Christ (verse 24). *How clear it is that God's people learn to rule by being ruled!*

**4.** Under Christ's leadership and direction, are there various operations in God's Church? I Cor. 12:4-6. And is the Church of God thoroughly organized? Eph. 2:19-22; 4:15-16.

COMMENT: The Church—"the household of God"—is a family, even as God is a divine Family. The Church is also compared to a building and a human body with its various parts. Today the



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**GOSPEL GOES TO WORLD LEADERS**—As one “sent forth,” God’s apostle has talked with heads of state worldwide, proclaiming the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong (right) is shown with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Church is well organized according to Jesus Christ’s instructions which are found in His written Word. All the parts are joined and functioning together in harmony and teamwork. The Church is compressed together, as closely together as if welded together. This shows *organized* unity!

**5.** To administer the various operations of the Church, what spiritual offices has God set in the Church under Christ? Eph. 4:11-12.

**COMMENT:** An *apostle* is “one sent forth” with Christ’s Gospel Message of the coming Kingdom of God. The apostle also supervises the proclaiming of that message to the world by means and persons other than himself. Also, an apostle has supervision over all the local congregations or churches (I Cor. 16:1; II Cor. 11:28).

The *prophets* set in the foundation of the Church are those of the Old Testament era, whose writings were used to form a considerable part of New Testament teaching and functioning. The word “prophesy” is often used in the sense of “to preach, or proclaim.” So some of the preachers in God’s Church might well be termed “prophets”—but no literal prophets in the early New Testament Church are mentioned as having any executive, administrative, or preaching functions.

*Evangelists* in Paul’s day were leading ministers proclaiming the Gospel to the public, even raising up local churches and having supervision over some churches under the apostle. Therefore, an

evangelist may hold executive function under the apostle in the Church today. An evangelist is not necessarily stationed in one place.

*Pastors* are ministers placed over a local church or group of local churches.

In the early New Testament Church there were also *teachers* who were not necessarily preachers. Yet all ministers and teachers are called elders in other New Testament passages. Therefore, in God’s Church today there are both *preaching* and *nonpreaching elders*. Preaching elders pastor local churches. Then some elders, not all of whom are preachers, are called local elders in the Church today.

**6.** Do members of the body of Christ decide for themselves what they want to believe, or have they received their beliefs and doctrines from the apostles of Jesus Christ who, along with the Old Testament prophets, are the very foundation of God’s New Testament Church? Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20. Where did Christ’s apostles get their doctrines? Matt. 28:18-20.

**COMMENT:** The early New Testament Church received its beliefs, teachings and customs from the apostles who had been taught by Christ personally. (Included were the writings of the Old Testament prophets, as mentioned before.) Thus the individuals in the early Church did not decide doctrine for themselves, nor did they individually receive the truth from Christ. Christ taught the apostles and

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He held them responsible for teaching the doctrines to the Church.

**7.** What did God, through the Apostle Paul, instruct the Church to speak? I Cor. 1:10.

COMMENT: God's Word states that all the members of the body of Christ must "speak the same thing." In other words, there must be no division in what is believed, taught, or preached. God's Church cannot be *divided!* Therefore, individual members of the body of Christ today also continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrines—just as the early New Testament Christians did.

The doctrines of God's Church came from God through Jesus Christ, who taught the original apostles. These *same* doctrines are taught by God's apostle today, whom Christ taught through His *written* Word. God's present-day apostle, in turn, has taught the ministers of God under him. And these ministers faithfully teach members in God's one true Church these same doctrines on the Sabbath in congregations of like-minded individuals in many nations around the world!

### **Function of the Individual Members**

**1.** Is God's Church made up of those individual members who are a part of the "body of Christ"? I Cor. 12:27. Does the Church have *many members* as does the human body? Verses 12-14. Is each member important within the one body? Verses 18-25.

COMMENT: We have seen that the Church is made up of the begotten children of God whom the Father has called out of the world. It is the "body of Christ." It is the *organized spiritual organism*—the affianced bride of Christ that shall be married to Christ after her resurrection to immortality.

With the help of God's Holy Spirit, the individual members of the Church are overcoming Satan, the world and themselves. They are developing the holy, righteous character of God. Thus they are qualifying to sit with Christ on the throne of earth-wide government—to rule and teach the nations. But what *specific functions* do the members serve in the Church today?

As we have learned, the proclaiming of the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and "feeding" the membership is a *twofold* function of the Church.

The individual lay member *has a vital part* in one of these functions: proclaiming the Gospel to the world. How? Certainly not by personally proclaiming Christ's message to his community or to the world. That is done primarily by the apostle, to some extent by evangelists, and to a lesser extent in local areas by Church pastors. (The

chief responsibility of a pastor is supervision of, and preaching to, a local Church, as mentioned before.)

In the first century, the Gospel was proclaimed by the apostles and evangelists. Then *what part* did the individual lay members have in it? MUCH! Without this larger body of lay members, the apostles could not have carried out Christ's Great Commission!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God, says emphatically that he, as Christ's apostle today, and the evangelists, pastors and elders could not carry on the Work of God without the loyal backing and continual encouragement of the lay members.

Neither can the individual lay member develop and build within him God's holy, righteous and perfect character *without* the functions of the apostle, evangelists, pastors and elders. All these various members whom *God has set* in His Church are interdependent—mutually dependent on one another. They form a *TEAM*—an *organized spiritual organism*—utterly different from any secular and worldly organization!

How, more specifically, does this mutual dependency operate?

In general, the whole operation of the Church costs money in this late twentieth century world. Facilities and methods that did not exist in the first century world, such as television, radio and the printed page, are available to the Church for the performance of its Commission. Without the tithes and generous freewill offerings of the lay members, the Church's Commission could not be performed in today's world!

Also, without the fervent and prevailing, continual PRAYERS of all members, the Work of God could not be accomplished. And without the continual ENCOURAGEMENT of lay members and those over them locally, those operating from Headquarters could not bear up under the persecutions, oppositions and trials of doing God's end-time Work!

Conversely, the lay members need just as urgently the encouragement, teaching, counseling and leadership from Headquarters and from local pastors. How beautiful is the organized *teamwork* in God's Church!

### **The Church as Spiritual "Mother"**

God reveals that His Church is the spiritual "mother" of spirit-begotten Christians. They are spiritual "embryos" and "fetuses"—already children of *God*, but as yet unborn—because they are still growing spiritually after having been *begotten*

by God's Holy Spirit. The Church is thus God's spiritual organism for feeding with spiritual food and training and developing in righteous character the future sons of God the Father!

Let's fully understand this wonderful truth. Let's see how human reproduction pictures spiritual reproduction, and learn exactly what part God's Church plays in developing future members of the divine Family of God.

Human begetting, the period of gestation and then finally birth are types of spiritual reproduction—of being *born* into the God Family. Human reproduction pictures spiritual salvation.

All human life begins as a tiny egg—called an ovum—produced inside the human mother. But this ovum has a very limited life. Some doctors and scientists believe it has a life span of approximately 24 hours, unless fertilized by a sperm cell produced in the body of the human father. Upon entering the ovum, the sperm finds its way to and joins with the ovum nucleus. This imparts *life*—physical *human* life—to the ovum.

But it is not yet a born human being. Human life has merely been *begotten*. For the first two months it is called an embryo. Then, until birth, it is called a fetus.

The newly-begotten embryo must then be fed and nourished with physical food through the mother. As a result of this physical nourishment it

**MOTHER'S ROLE**—Just as an infant is dependent on his mother, every true Christian needs the spiritual nourishment and loving care that only his spiritual mother—God's Church—can provide.



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grows, and *grows* and **GROWS**—until it is ready to be born, normally after nine months.

Now notice the amazing comparison between human reproduction and spiritual reproduction.

A human has to be *begotten* by a human father. And to be born of God—as a God Being in the Family of God—one must first be *begotten* by the spiritual Father—Almighty God! Let's grasp this amazing truth.

**1.** Does the Spirit of God impart God's *divine life* and *nature* to a person when he is begotten by God the Father? II Peter 1:4. But how much of God's Spirit does one receive when spiritually begotten? II Cor. 5:5. Is one so begotten a literal child of God? Rom. 8:16; I John 3:1-2.

**COMMENT:** By analogy each adult human life can be compared to an "egg" or "ovum." This "ovum" has a very limited life span—an average of some 70 years—compared to eternal life. But spiritual, divine immortal life may be imparted *to* it by God the Father.

As the physical male sperm finds its way to and unites with the *nucleus* in the ovum, so God's Spirit enters and combines with the human spirit in man! This happens upon receipt of the Holy Spirit, after real repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands of a true minister of God.

One thus begotten by the Spirit of God is now a "babe in Christ" (I Cor. 3:1). He is already a child of God, though yet unborn. By direct analogy the embryo in a mother's womb is *already* the child of its parents, though not yet born.

A spirit-begotten child of God now has the presence of eternal life—God life—through God's Spirit, but he is not yet an immortal spirit being—not yet *born* of God—not yet an inheritor and possessor, but merely an "heir" with Christ (Rom. 8:17). The divine life of God has merely been *begotten*.

This divine life and character starts so very small in one it is doubtful if much of it is in evidence—except for the glow of that ecstasy of spiritual "romance" which one may radiate in that "first love" of conversion, spiritually speaking. But so far as spiritual knowledge and developed righteous character goes, there is not much—yet.

Once spiritually begotten, we are merely a spiritual "embryo." Now we must be fed and nourished on *spiritual* food so we can grow spiritually! Jesus said man shall not live by bread (physical food) alone, but by *every word of God* (spiritual food)! This we take in from the *Bible*. But we also drink in this spiritual knowledge and develop God's righteous character through personal, intimate, daily contact with God through *prayer*, and through Christian *fellowship* with other begotten children



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**SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION**—Members of God's Church are instructed in His way of life during weekly Sabbath services, and at special annual festivals as shown above. This instruction is vital to spiritual growth and prepares God's people to teach others in the World Tomorrow.

in God's Church. And also by the *spiritual teaching* imparted by the Church!

**2.** What is God's Church—Jerusalem above—called in Galatians 4:26?

COMMENT: Beginning with verse 22 of Galatians chapter 4 is an allegory about the two covenants—the Old Covenant made with national Israel at Mt. Sinai, and the New Covenant to be made with Christ's spiritual Church at His return, as we learned in Lesson 17. In this allegory the Church is called "the *mother* of us all"—that is, of those in the Church of God.

Notice the exact parallel of spiritual reproduction with human reproduction! The Church is the spiritual "mother" of its members—just as a human mother is the mother of her begotten, but unborn human child. And the physical embryo is fed physically through the mother.

**3.** Has God set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to nourish the members so they will grow spiritually? I Peter 5:1-2; Eph. 4:11-13.

COMMENT: The human mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best *protect* it from physical harm; and that protection is part of her function, as well as to *nourish* the unborn child. Likewise, the Church, through Christ's ministry, spiritually *nourishes*—instructs, teaches, counsels, advises—and *protects* the unborn children of God from the spiritual harm of false ministers and false doctrines!

**4.** As the physical embryo and then fetus must

grow physically until it is large enough to be born, must the spirit-begotten Christian also *grow* in grace and in the knowledge of Christ? II Peter 3:18. Must he overcome and develop in spiritual character during this life in order to be born into the Kingdom of God? Rev. 21:7.

COMMENT: As the physical embryo gradually develops the organs, features, and characteristics of a human being, even so the spirit-begotten Christian must gradually develop the righteous character of God—love, faith, patience, gentleness, temperance, etc. (Gal. 5:22-23). He (or she) does so by living by—being a *doer* of—the Word of God! And it is the function of the *Church*—as the spiritual "mother" of Christians in it—to help develop holy, righteous and perfect *Godly character* in those God has called and added to His Church.

Then, in God's due time, by a resurrection or by instantaneous change to immortality at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 15:49-53; I Thess. 4:16-17), the begotten child of God shall be *born* of God—enter into the Kingdom or Family of God!

**5.** Will one thus born again be composed of spirit, even as God is spirit? John 3:5-8; 4:24.

COMMENT: How wonderfully human reproduction pictures spiritual reproduction in God's Family! Yet, by his deceptions Satan has blinded humanity to the fact that we may be born as spirit-composed individuals—as part of that divine Family—as part of the God Kingdom of which the Church is now in embryonic form!

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## Salvation Outside of God's Church?

Can a person receive salvation *outside* of God's one true Church—the “mother” of His spirit-begotten children through whom they are being fed spiritual food? What does the Bible say?

Jesus Christ said: “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). He did not say: “I will organize dozens of different groups or churches.” There is no record in the Bible of Jesus building two, three, a dozen or perhaps several hundred churches or religions having different teachings and beliefs.

Jesus came to build only *ONE Church!* (Eph. 4:4.) And the one and only Church Jesus said He would build began in A.D. 31 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples who were assembled “with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).

The members of God's Church do not merely decide that they would like to “join” His Church, decide what they would like to believe, and begin attending services. It is God who *calls* an individual and *grants* repentance (John 6:44; Rom. 2:4), and new members are added to the Church of God only upon repentance, baptism and receipt of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 47; I Cor. 12:13). The repentant believer becomes a begotten child of God when he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. And he believes the doctrines Jesus has put into His Church.

Let's understand further.

**1.** To what did Jesus liken Himself by analogy? John 15:1. And to what did He compare individual members of His Church? Verse 5. Can the branches bear fruit apart from the vine? Verses 4-5.

COMMENT: Jesus pictured Himself as the vine and those of His Church as the branches on that vine. Notice that Jesus is not several separated vines—He is *one* vine! The members of the body of Christ are the branches—but not separated, isolated branches from the vine. All are joined to the one vine—the body of Christ.

**2.** But what happens to those branches which are separated and broken off from the vine—which separate themselves from the body of Christ? Verses 2, 6.

COMMENT: Jesus was speaking to those chosen to be apostles in His Church. He told them that the Father is the husbandman—the vinedresser (verse 1). Every branch of this vine (the Church) that does not bear fruit for the Kingdom, the Father prunes—cuts off—that the organized, united vine may bear more fruit.

Jesus' analogy is a grave warning to those who would *cut themselves off* from His Church. They

will stop growing, wither, and finally die!

**3.** Will those who decided to seek personal salvation “outside” of God's Church be married to Christ when He marries His affianced bride—the Church of God—at His return? Rev. 19:7; Matt. 25:10-12.

COMMENT: Only those who are a part of the bride that has made herself ready will be married to Christ at His return, as was discussed in Lesson 17. Christ will marry His one, true Church—not a conglomeration of disunited groups, denominations or isolated individuals who try to follow Christ in their own way instead of God's way (Prov. 14:12).

If one leaves the body of Christ and no longer wants to have a part in what it is doing, he has gone away from Christ and will not be a part of the bride that is to marry Him, because Jesus Christ is going to marry God's one and only united Church!

At Christ's soon coming, His wife-to-be shall have made herself ready and will enter into the New Covenant marriage with Him. The door will then be shut to all those who falsely assumed they were ready when the bridegroom, Christ, comes to marry His Church. Those who thought they could “go it alone” or joined various groups or denominations of men will then come and knock on the door—but Christ will say, “I know you not” (Matt. 25:12).

God Himself laid out the plan of salvation and the method by which humans, after spiritual begetting, may be trained and prepared to become the spirit-born God Beings who shall form the Kingdom of God. God's divine Family will be a highly-trained and superbly-organized Family, having learned God's pattern of mutual teamwork and cooperation to function perfectly together. They shall become the divine, universe-ruling Family of God!

One who says, “I will live alone in Satan's world—I will be no part of the Family”—is, therefore, obviously *not in the Family!* He will not have been trained and developed in spiritual character according to God's pattern and plan. Such a one cannot fit in as a part of the God Family if not trained and developed within the spirit-begotten Family—the Church!

God will not allow anyone into His Family at the resurrection who refuses now to be part of the Church which is receiving spiritual training. This is why it is so important for those who are now called and begotten of God to grow and overcome, and be loyal and obedient to the Government of God in His Church—for the Church is indeed the Kingdom of God in *embryo*, soon to be born of the Spirit of God!

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