

# What Every Reader Needs to Know About the FOUNDATION, HISTORY, AUTHORITY AND DOCTRINE OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

*by Herbert W. Armstrong*

*page 2 Plain Truth February 1978*

---

*We are now in the second—almost the third—generation of the Worldwide Church of God. Many if not most Plain Truth readers today know little or nothing about its origin, history, source and nature of its government, and how it came to believe what it believes, or how those beliefs were put by the living Christ into His Church. Every reader needs to know these facts. We hear much about "roots" these days. You need to know not only the trunk of the tree in order to understand the branches and twigs in their right and true perspective—but you need to know about the "roots" from which even the trunk and whole tree (Worldwide Church of God) has grown.*

---

First of all, you need to know that you live in a world cut off completely from God. Even though I have said it before, let me put it in a brief "nutshell." Let me restate the "roots."

Once the GOVERNMENT OF GOD ruled on this earth. God put angels here to inhabit the earth before the creation of man. Under their king Lucifer, super archangel, the most powerful being God can create next to God Himself, they rejected God's government, turned to the opposite way of life.

God's government is based on the law and principle of love—the way of GIVING. It is giving to God a return of His love which He gives us—giving to God obedience to His law of love and way of life; giving to God reverence, worship, adoration. Lucifer chose and turned his angels to the opposite way of GETTING—the way of self-love—the way of vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition and strife, resentment toward others, and over any authority over one. (Especially the way of rebellion against God and His truth.)

## **Where Man Went Wrong**

This brought on the earth chaos, decay, waste, emptiness and darkness. Psalms 104:30 says God then RENEWED the face of the earth (Genesis 1), in six days

creating man after God's own kind (Gen. 1:26). God created man mortal—male and female—out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). God offered the first man and woman, from whom the human race has sprung, eternal life in the Kingdom of God, actually being born as one of God's own children in the God FAMILY (symbolized by the tree of life)—or (Adam had to make a choice) rejection of God and His government, and taking to himself the knowledge of good and evil (deciding for himself right from wrong). God is the source of basic knowledge. Man rejected this knowledge.

Adam rebelled—rejected God's GOVERNMENT and God's WAY OF LIFE, choosing to go his own way, decide for himself, create his own knowledge. In other words, follow the course of the sinning angels (II Pet. 2:4). Whereupon God sentenced Adam and his family—all mankind in general—to 6,000 years of being totally cut off from God's government, God's religion, God's basic knowledge, God's ways that produce peace and happiness and give eternal life.

God said, in effect: "You have decided! Go! Form your own ideas of government, form your own religions and kinds of worship, form your own type of education and production of knowledge, form your own way of living—form your own society and civilization, wholly cut off from me."

For 6,000 years, that is.

Yet God reserved the right to INTERVENE in specific cases, or in specific individuals, as He deemed necessary to His purpose!

### **Is God Trying to Save the World Now?**

God did intervene in the cases of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham—the nation Israel. He communicated to them His way. He intervened in sending Christ with the MESSAGE to be announced of the coming restoration of the government of God after the 6,000 years of man's rule. Christ announced that man may be, if and when called by God, forgiven, reconciled (relationship and access to God established), and can receive God's Spirit (the impregnation of GOD-life) and be born into the God family by a resurrection from the dead. But a first death was pronounced on all children of Adam because of Adam's sin (I Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27) and a SECOND death as penalty IF man rejects God's salvation when and after God calls him.

But He has not been calling THE WORLD for the 6,000 years.

Adam and Eve did not believe what God said. They rejected Him. Jesus preached His good news message to countless thousands, yet only 120 believed what He said (Acts 1:15). Jesus taught His good news message to His apostles. They went forth and proclaimed it, but by about A.D. 59 it was suppressed.

Christ raised up His Church on Pentecost, A.D. 31. He called it "the little flock." It was, compared to the world's total population, only a "little" or "tiny" flock. Jesus did not come on a "soul-saving crusade."

Remember, the world as a whole was cut off from God. God was not yet trying to "get the world saved." Only those FEW God specially called—just the few in whom God intervened in this world's civilization—those He deemed important to His purpose.

What of all the others? They were as yet not being judged—not lost. Their time is yet to come.

The only ones called to salvation or any personal contact with God for the first 1900 some years were Abel, Enoch and Noah. Then God intervened to specially call Abraham. Abraham did not seek God; it was God who chose, intervened, and called Abraham. Notice it! "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation ..." (Gen. 12:1-2). That nation was to be Israel, known as GOD'S NATION, to be separate from this world's society which is cut off from God. Abraham did not call on God. God called Abraham for a special mission. Also his sons, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and Joseph.

But the world as a whole was cut off from all access to God. It was building its own governments, its own religions, its own knowledge and systems of education—going its own ways!

Four hundred and thirty years after Abraham, God raised up Moses in a special way for a SPECIAL MISSION—to lead the children of Israel, descended from Abraham, then slaves in Egypt, numbering probably two or three million (perhaps even more, for there were 600,000 men, besides women and children—and they had many children!).

God did not offer spiritual salvation to Israel. He offered them, in return for obedience to His government, only physical, material, national rewards and greatness. The only ones "converted" or CALLED for salvation between Moses and Christ were Moses and the prophets sent to Israel and Judah. They, and they ONLY, were given the Holy Spirit, and that only so they could perform the WORK God called them to do in God's own nations, Israel and Judah. All these years God was not trying to save the world spiritually. The world was totally cut off from God! Moses was further used in writing the first five books of the Bible, as God was making available His revelation of basic KNOWLEDGE.

## **The Good News Announcement**

Then came Jesus Christ as the Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3:1 and Mark 1:1, 14-15). He brought an announcement—a message from God—the good news announcement of the coming Kingdom of God! But He did not come on a "soul-saving crusade." As stated before, of the thousands who heard Him announce the coming Kingdom of God, only 120 BELIEVED what He said (Acts 1:15). They formed the beginning of the Church of God when they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. That same day God added to them about three thousand whom He had specially called (Acts 2:41). Then, after that, "the Lord ADDED to the church daily such as should be [at the resurrection] saved" (verse

47). The apostles did not get these people saved—but God added such as He CALLED to be saved.

Thus the Church of God started. It started in a world cut off from God—and comparatively very small. Jesus called it "the little flock" (Luke 12:32). For a short time it grew to a few thousand members God had called and added. Then, in a short time, the persecution set in (Acts 8:1) and the Church was diminished in size.

## **True Church Goes Underground**

The true gospel of the Kingdom of God was suppressed by the false church raised up by Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8) in A.D. 33. In reality it was the remnant of the Babylonian Mystery Religion, which appropriated the name "Christian" and deceived the whole world (Rev. 17:2, 5). By A.D. 59 even the churches had turned to another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7). The true gospel was suppressed!

The "little flock"—the true Church of God—virtually went underground. The gospel had to be taught secretly. Thousands of true Christians were tortured and martyred—put to death by the fast-growing false Babylonish church.

Ever since then only a comparative few have been called by God to repentance, belief and spiritual salvation.

Let me make that plain!

In Ephesians 1, Paul addresses his inspired letter "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful IN Christ Jesus" (verse 1). He is writing to saints in Christ—not to the world. When Paul here uses the pronoun "us," he means those saints and includes himself.

He says: "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having PREDESTINATED us unto the SONSHIP [as it should read] of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (verses 4-5).

Predestinated—why? To be lost? No! To become God's sons—His own children. The rest of the world, remember, is cut off from God—has no access to Him.

He continues: "In whom also we [not the world] have obtained an INHERITANCE, being PREDESTINATED according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who FIRST trusted in Christ" (verses 11-12).

Notice what that says: We were predestinated to be the FIRST to trust in Christ—to receive SALVATION. We were specially CALLED, chosen—while the rest of the world is cut off from God and Christ.

After the second coming of Christ—after He establishes the Kingdom of God and the whole world comes under Christ's rule at the end of this DAY OF MAN (this

6,000 years when the world as a whole is cut off from Christ)—then EVERYBODY will be called to salvation (Matt. 25:31-40).

But today only the precious predestinated FEW! Jesus plainly said: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ..." (John 6:44).

## **World Cut Off From God**

Again get this: understand it! The world as a whole is cut off from all access to God. God has not been trying to save the world. God sentenced this world to 6,000 years of going its own way—forming man's own governments, his own religions—all false—his own knowledge and systems of education—his own society going the way of "get" rather than of "love." Instead of trying to save this sinning world, God sentenced it to sowing its own ways, and reaping what it sows—to prove once and for all that ONLY God's way of love is good for us.

Just look at the result today! Soon, if God does not step in and intervene, and take over the rule, man will destroy himself. For the first time in history the weapons of mass destruction are available that can erase all life, including all humanity, from this earth.

Just before man brings that about, God will intervene once again, stopping it by His supernatural power, and send Christ to rule with the Kingdom of God over all nations.

Then Satan will be put away at last (Rev. 20:1-4). Christ on His throne will go out to save all who are willing (Matt. 25:31). After a thousand years of Christ's rule will come the Great White Throne Judgment—the resurrection back to mortal physical life of all since Adam (except those God had intervened to call). That will be many billions. God is NOT trying to save them now—He will then.

Finally, at last, everyone will have been called and had his chance for salvation and eternal life!

## **A Divine Master Plan**

The Holy Days picture God's MASTER PLAN. The Day of Pentecost is called the Feast of Firstfruits—just the small FIRST harvest for God's Kingdom—including us, now. The Feast of Trumpets pictures the coming of Christ to rule. The Day of Atonement pictures putting Satan away so we may be at one with Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the millennium—the Kingdom of God ruling—the thousand years when all then living will be called, and saved if they are willing. The final day of the fall Feast pictures the Great White Throne Judgment, when the billions sentenced to be cut off from God will be resurrected mortal, and then called, drawn to Christ and saved if they are willing.

## **Back to the Beginning**

But I have gotten a little ahead of myself.

It is necessary that we go back once again to the beginning. When Satan got to Eve in the Garden of Eden, he did not say, "Reject God's government, and come under my government." No, he was too subtle for that! He said, in effect: "God lied to you. You won't surely die if you take to yourself the production of the knowledge of what is good and what is evil. *Rule your own life*. God knows that when you eat this forbidden fruit, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods [a correct translation would be, "You shall be God"], knowing good and evil."

Notice, too, that God did not sentence mankind to 6,000 years of Satan's rule. God allowed man to be deceived by Satan. God allowed man to THINK he was forming his own governments, his own religions, producing his own knowledge and education. But God knew how Satan would deceive all mankind (Rev. 12:9), blinding man's eyes from the truth, and swaying him by broadcasting ATTITUDES through the air. Conditions in the world, with man ruling himself, unknowingly swayed by Satan, have grown worse and worse.

The true Church remained pretty much underground until it shrank to the level that the GREAT CHURCH (of Revelation 17) didn't bother any longer to try to stamp it out. It was in such a world that this "Philadelphia era" of God's Church was born. We had now come to the very living generation that shall witness the end of this age, and the coming of Christ, and setting up of the Kingdom of God.

In other words, it is in this living generation when the great event that Christ announced over 1900 years ago will actually happen! This is the living generation that shall live in two worlds—the end of this present evil world, and the beginning of the world tomorrow ruled by the Kingdom of God! The time had come for this tremendous gospel announcement to go out to the very world that will live to see it happen!

## **Preparation for God's Work**

In a sense there is a parallel in my own life. I have lived in two different centuries. I lived in the end (the last eight years) of the nineteenth century, and, so far, seventy-eight years in this twentieth century. God has, in a number of cases, prepared in advance those He calls to a very special mission. In the Old Testament, God prepared Moses by having him brought up in the king's palace by the king's daughter, as a prince. In the New Testament He prepared the apostle Paul by having him educated by the great teacher of that time, Gamaliel. Of course these men were living the way of this world during the pre-training period.

The same was true in my case. I will cover just very briefly the high spots of that early training, before I was converted and called and THE GREAT COMMISSION conferred on me.

At age sixteen, on my first summer vacation job away from home in another town, my employer aroused ambition in me. He instilled great self-confidence. He assured me I was destined to be a great success, but I would have to work hard to achieve it. But I had no GOAL in life—the first law of success.

At eighteen, after thorough self-analysis and analysis of various professions, occupations, etc., I set my life goal as the advertising profession. It was the wrong goal, but God changed that in due time. Nevertheless, it did PREPARE me for God's commission! I was successful. I put myself in contact with successful men—the presidents and board chairmen of the great industrial corporations of the middle west in the United States, and of the great banks of Chicago and New York. In my twenties, I was making the equivalent of (at today's dollar-value) \$150,000 a year!

I had spent three years with the largest trade journal in the U.S.—the *Merchants Trade Journal*. I worked one year writing advertising copy, two years as their "idea man" (travelling the eastern two-thirds of the United States, looking for ideas and material for articles), and finally writing articles for publication. Then a short time as assistant secretary of the South Bend, Indiana, Chamber of Commerce; then seven years as advertising representative—or publishers' representative with an office in Chicago's loop.

I built a big-paying business by making surveys resulting in large-space advertising from such companies as Goodyear Tire and Rubber, J. I. Case Plow Works, Moline Plow Works, Emerson Brantingham, John Deere & Co., Dalton Adding Machine, and others. Every one of these giant corporations went into receivership during the flash depression of 1920. My business suddenly, by forces beyond my control, was swept away.

### **Shocking Challenges Spur Search for Truth**

My family, with my wife's brother and sister, migrated to Oregon in 1924. It was an 18-day trip over dirt and gravel unpaved roads in a Model-T Ford.

In the autumn of 1926, I was hit by a dual CHALLENGE. My wife had suddenly taken up with "religious fanaticism," as it then seemed to me. A sister-in-law challenged me on the theory of evolution, which she had been taught in college. She called me "downright ignorant" because I did not accept or believe the theory.

This dual CHALLENGE plunged me into the most intensive in-depth study and research of my life—a virtual night-and-day study. I delved into the writings of Darwin, LaMarck, Huxley, Haekel, Chamberlin, etc., etc., but primarily the Bible. I had quit attending church at eighteen, and had never had any real religious interest.

I was shocked—actually stunned—when I read in the Bible, in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death...." I had been taught from early boyhood that what we got paid for sin was ETERNAL LIFE—though in "hellfire." Here I had been taught in Sunday school just the opposite of what the Bible taught. But the last half of the sentence floored me just as hard: "... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What? Eternal life a GIFT? I had been taught I already had eternal life. I was an immortal soul.

You see, I had told my wife that I knew the Bible said, "Thou shalt keep Sunday." I didn't know where to find that in the Bible, I admitted. But I knew it must be there, "because," I said, "all these churches get their religion out of the Bible, and they all (but one I thought of as fanatical) observe Sunday. All these churches can't be wrong," I argued.

In this study I obtained every book I could find that upheld Sunday observance and condemned Saturday Sabbath-keeping. But I also obtained a Seventh-day Adventist book explaining their doctrines, and also a book called *Bible Home Instructor* (or something like that) published by the Church of God, Stanberry, Missouri. It was one of their members, neighbor to my parents' home in Salem, Oregon, who had convinced my wife she ought to keep the Sabbath, Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

On carefully checking with the Bible, I found most denominations had some Bible truth. I could see plainly from my own biblical study they were totally contrary to the Bible in many other beliefs. As my study continued, always relying on the Bible—which, incidentally, I had PROVED to be the inspired WORD OF GOD—I discovered that this Church of God had more biblical truth than any church I could find.

### **Simon's Apostasy**

But as my own in-depth study continued, I found much they lacked. I later discovered they were described in Revelation 3 as the Sardis era of God's Church. I discovered that after the great persecution which had set in about A.D. 33 Simon the sorcerer, leader of the "Babylonian Mystery" religion, was refused an apostleship in God's Church. He, as I learned from other sources, nevertheless represented himself as chief apostle, adopting the name of Christ—or Christian. He proclaimed the biblical doctrine of "grace" or forgiveness of sin through Christ's death, but turned it into license to disobey (Jude 4).

This Babylonian Mystery religion, now masquerading as "Christianity," suppressed the gospel Christ had taught. Jesus brought the announcement of the Kingdom of God. Simon's false church claimed their church was the Kingdom, already set up. He proclaimed a DIFFERENT Jesus as well as a DIFFERENT gospel. He proclaimed a Christ who DID AWAY with His Father's commandments—thus doing away with the basic constitution and law of the Kingdom of God. He taught, and his false church later (A.D. 321) made official, the "Trinity" doctrine, saying the Holy Spirit of God is a GHOST—a third spirit PERSON—thereby doing away with the fact that we can be begotten by God's Spirit and enter the Kingdom at the time of the resurrection.

### **Solving a Jigsaw Puzzle**

As stated before, the true Church virtually went "underground." The true Church did continue through EVERY GENERATION to now. But when I first came among them, in 1926-27, they had lost most of the true gospel! Little by little God revealed His true gospel, in all its fullness, to me.

But first God had to completely disillusion my mind of all I had been taught in Sunday school prior to age eighteen. God caused me to come to His work with a mind swept clean of all these false teachings—free to reject error and accept TRUTH! I know of no other worldwide religious leader since the original apostles, and Paul, all of whom were taught by Christ IN PERSON, who ever came to God's teachings in this manner!

I found the Sardis-era Church of God retained only a smattering of the full true gospel. They understood Christ is coming to REIGN, and He will reign 1,000 years, and ON EARTH! (Seventh-day Adventists say in heaven.) But they had lost all knowledge that we could be BORN OF GOD, entering His Kingdom which is His FAMILY as His BORN CHILDREN. They had no conception of what the Kingdom of God is or would be like. Some believed in a pre-millennial coming of Christ, some in a post-millennial coming.

They had the truth about the Sabbath, but not the annual Sabbaths. They had the truth about NOT going to heaven, and that the earth is the inheritance of the "saved." They had the truth about the "state of the dead"—that the dead are unconscious and know nothing—that the next consciousness after death will take place at the resurrection. They knew the "hellfire" commonly preached is error, and that usually the word "hell" is translated from the Hebrew *sheol* and Greek *hades*, meaning simply the "grave." (In some cases "hell" is translated from the Greek *gehenna*, meaning fire that BURNS UP what is burned in it.)

They believed in water baptism by immersion. They believed—one of their most emphasized points—Jesus was three days and three nights in the grave (crucified Wednesday, resurrected Saturday evening, and already gone while it was yet dark at sunrise Sunday). Thus they did away with Easter, and they did not observe Christmas, since it was a pagan holiday and Jesus was not born at or near December 25. They believed in the "law of God" and knew sin was the transgression of God's law.

Let me say here that the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle. You find its truths here a little—there a little. It does not start out with Genesis 1:1 and go straight through with ALL of God's revealed KNOWLEDGE and TRUTH in direct sequence. In fact, the REAL beginning is not Genesis 1:1, but John 1:1. Much had happened between John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1, filled in from other places in both Old and New Testaments.

## **Truth Revealed Slowly**

But God was revealing His truth to me. At first I had to learn a doctrine at a time. In other words, if the whole truth were a jigsaw puzzle of 100 pieces, I found the Church of God of the Sardis era, even though God's Church, had lost about 75 of the pieces, though some were among the important pieces. But it was impossible to fit them together so as to produce the WHOLE and FULL PICTURE, plain and clear.

God was inspiring me to fill in the gaps.

With what they had—which God made clear to my mind were TRUE doctrines—the picture was all distorted. It did not show why humans were put on earth. It did not show what was God's purpose that caused Him to decide to create humanity in His likeness, and put them on earth. There plainly was a devil called Satan, but where did he come from? Did God create a devil to torment us? One of their prominent ministers, because they had no answer to this, preached that no such thing as a devil exists.

Why is the human mind so superior to the animal brain, when there is virtually no difference qualitatively and quantitatively? They had none of these truths. Where was the United States identified in prophecy? They did not know this, and therefore had prophecies of the "beast" and those of Daniel and Revelation all in error—even as the Adventists. They did not understand that God is not trying to save the whole world now—or why. It was my understanding that they looked on this world as God's world, and God was trying desperately to save it, but the devil was winning the battle.

What is man's real potential? Aside from being resurrected immortal, which they believed for the saved—then what? What was the real purpose in putting humanity on earth, after all? If the "saved" are resurrected, where do we go on from there? What shall we be doing for all eternity? Will we get bored with nothing to do?

### **Filling in the Gaps**

Little by little, God revealed to me more and more TRUTHS—additional pieces of God's revealed KNOWLEDGE that filled in the gaps—answered all the questions.

Why is the human brain able to invent such intricate mechanisms, to fly to the moon and back, and yet be utterly helpless to solve man's problems—to live at peace with his neighbor? They could answer, vaguely, "Because man is unwilling to keep God's commandments." And that's true—but why? Why is he unwilling? There is so much more that needs to be known than the limited truths they possessed.

God revealed to me the truth about Israel and Judah—the divided kingdoms, and the Birthright promise to Ephraim and the Sceptre promise to Judah. They understood none of this, and, though their editor and leader wrote me that this was a truth revealed from God to me, he filed it away and the Church (Sardis) never got it!

The truth of how God is reproducing Himself was revealed to me. God's master plan could never be understood by them, since they rejected the annual Sabbaths and festivals that reveal and picture the master plan.

### **Restoring Basic Knowledge**

To sum it all up, God raised me up and used me in RESTORING the basic knowledge that had been lost through the generations since the churches turned to ANOTHER GOSPEL (Gal. 1:6-7) in the very first century.

God led me not only to recognize and accept what truth the Church of the Sardis era retained, but to restore what God's Church through the many generations had lost—and, in addition, I think, to reveal through me additional vital knowledge from God's Word, possibly not even understood by the apostle Paul.

Daniel foretold that in OUR TIME—this time of the end—just at the very end of this 6,000-year "day of man," with mankind generally cut off from God, that "knowledge shall be increased." Undoubtedly he referred to God's revealed knowledge—but it is significant that even in man's world, cut off from God, technological, "scientific," and physical knowledge has greatly increased. In the decade of the '60s the world's fund of knowledge doubled—though man's troubles and evils also doubled.

### **God's Ultimate Purpose**

God has graciously opened my mind (not for my benefit, but for His church) to much I believe to be NEW KNOWLEDGE. God has blessed His Church with stupendous knowledge which I believe no man—not even in God's Church—ever understood before! How wonderful! What a blessing! How we should shout for joy!

Do we really realize this? Do we appreciate it? Do we delight in it? Or are we like the sow which would trample in the mud precious diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires, on her way to eat slop?

Do we recognize the true values?

Finally, God has revealed to me His ultimate grand and awesome purpose—what is man's real potential—what we will be doing through all eternity. Never bored. Always joyfully accomplishing new stupendous and super-wonderful achievements. Always looking forward to still greater designs; always looking back on great accomplishments, on and on throughout the whole vast endless universe!

How wonderful! God has revealed His wonderful, awesome truth to His Church, the Worldwide Church of God—God's Church for this time.

But now a few words about the rise and establishment of today's era of God's Church.

### **Fellowship With the Sardis Era**

During my initial in-depth study of the Bible, I came to know of the "Sardis" era (Rev. 3:1-6). It was a member of it that had shown my wife the truth about the Sabbath question. They were a small group meeting in a country schoolhouse south of Salem, Oregon.

My wife and I began fellowshiping with these sincere and humble people of God at the time of my conversion and baptism, spring of 1927. We carried on this

fellowship for several years, but we never joined them or became a member of the Sardis era of the Church of God.

These brethren urged me repeatedly to preach, but the last thing on earth I wanted to do was to be a preacher.

However, I continued my interest and study in the Bible, and continued to be thrilled as I received more and more understanding of the Bible. Finally, along in November (I think it was), I had discovered a special Sabbath covenant, established forever in Exodus 31:12-17. This was my first discovery of new truth on the Sabbath question. I was excited about it, and the desire to share this knowledge with these brethren outweighed my reluctance to preach.

Soon I was preaching more or less regularly before these people. I found there was a division between them in the area surrounding Jefferson, Oregon, and that there was another group of them besides the one in which I was fellowshiping. The brethren I was fellowshiping with split off from Stanberry, Missouri, so far as paying tithes was concerned. They incorporated as the Oregon Conference of the Church of God. By December of 1931 they wanted me to preach a ten-day evangelistic meeting in a church in Harrisburg, Oregon, which these brethren rented regularly. From my first sermon God blessed all my preaching and writing with success.

In July 1933, Mr. Elmer Fisher, who lived six miles west of Eugene, asked me to preach a six-weeks' campaign of evangelism at the Firbutte one-room country school. This schoolhouse was in a sparsely settled community. Considering the small population, my efforts were blessed with unusual success. This campaign ended with several newly baptized converts. I had presented the truth about the annual Holy Days and Festivals to the Oregon Conference brethren, but they "laughed me to scorn" (Matt. 9:24). Now, for the first time, I had newly converted brethren who immediately accepted this truth. A small church of 19 members emerged as the parent church, later to become the Worldwide Church of God.

I continued evangelistic meetings in many districts in and near Eugene, Oregon. The church grew. It accepted all of the new truths God was revealing to me in the Bible.

## **Philadelphia Era Born**

Let me make it clear that I was never a member of the church of the Sardis era. I did continue fellowshiping with them and preaching before them until the work which started the "Philadelphia era" of the Church consumed all my time. It was separately incorporated, and thus the present Worldwide Church of God came into being. This Church was born in August 1933. From that humble beginning I have met with nothing but persecution and opposition, even as Christ was when He appeared on earth.

It is a thankless job, because Satan is bound to destroy me if he can. The one thing uppermost on Satan's mind right now is to destroy God's Church, which he

is swaying more and more toward secularism—interest in material and physical things—going constantly a little more toward the world of Satan and its ways. The one thing uppermost on Satan's mind right now is to stop this message.

God is using me to take His message through the doors God is opening to kings, presidents, emperors, prime ministers, leaders of nations, and the people of those nations.

But the one thing uppermost on God's mind, right now, is to restore the government of God to the earth and to have it announced to the world. We have to rely on God, for He is stronger than Satan. That's why I need your heartrending, urgent prayers—that God will restrain Satan, and keep on protecting me miraculously—as He has done—from harm, keep on opening doors, renewing my youth, giving me the strength, the vitality, the energy and drive to keep on with His Work, knowing that you are 100 percent behind me, praying your hearts out for me.

If you don't, I cannot carry on.

I have not meant to criticize or blame in any way the people of God of the Sardis era. God allowed His persecuted "little flock" to diminish both in size and in His revealed knowledge. God could have raised up out of stones the one He wanted to do the Work. But He did call and choose me, revealed His TRUTH through me for all His Church, and has used me, and will still go on using me—if you are with me.

## **In Summary**

Go back to the beginning of this vitally important article.

I have shown you how this Church came to believe what it does—truths no other people on earth know! Truths nobody else on earth is proclaiming to the world!

I have shown you its ROOTS—its origin, its history, and its prehistory.

The one and only place in the world where the government of God is being administered is in the Worldwide Church of God. I have said to you that the thing uppermost in God's mind is restoring the government of God by and through the Kingdom of God on this earth. God has placed that government in His Church. This is a government based on LOVE. Some don't believe in it and are fighting it. I need you to be 100 percent back of me in it.

Every day now we are one day closer to GLORY! Time is running out on us. There are WONDERFUL THINGS ahead for us, but we must sacrifice, be faithful, and ENDURE *now!*

I have shown you how this Church came to believe what it believes. And how those precious beliefs were put into this Worldwide Church of God, by Christ through me. I have shown you HOW IT WAS FOUNDED. God says His Church is founded on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

Not only the original twelve apostles and Paul, but He used His one apostle for this twentieth century in founding this Philadelphia era of His Church.

Good News - May 1979

## **Now It Must Be Revealed . . . . How the Worldwide Church of God Began**

**by Herbert W. Armstrong  
Good News May 1979**

---

*The Church of God was founded A.D. 31, by Jesus Christ. It has continued through every generation. But how was the present era raised up? Here are vital facts of which many now in the Church are unaware.*

---

NOW IT MUST BE revealed -- the true story of how Jesus Christ prepared His servant far in advance and then called him in poverty, hunger and threadbare clothes -- of the struggle to raise up this era of God's Church in financial stress and on sheer living FAITH!

As a young man in my 20s, I had been eminently successful in the advertising profession, earning while still in my 20s an income comparable to \$150,000 a year in today's dollar value.

I was then unconverted and proud - ambitious and full of self-confidence. I did not then know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, Lord and Master and coming King!

The living Christ well knew that before He could effectively use me, I had to be humbled, subdued, CONQUERED by Him. I know now that God had guided my life *from the beginning*, preparing His *future* servant for His purpose -- even as He had prepared Moses, Job, the apostle Paul and others, in advance. Even in my birth, rearing, early business life, He was guiding me.

### **Of English ancestry**

I was born of humble but substantial and stable parents of solid Quaker stock. Our ancestors had emigrated from England *with* William Penn, a hundred years before the United States became a nation. They had settled in Pennsylvania, succeeding generations moving to Ohio, then to Indiana where my father was born, then Iowa where I was born.

My forebears are traced in a family genealogy, maintained by a special foundation, back to Edward I, and from there back to King David of ancient

Israel. Thus it has been revealed to me that in fact I am of the House of David. I was reared in a Protestant Sunday school, but at age 18 lost all interest in religion. God's time to call me to His service was not to come for another 16 years.

But in "the last days" when Christ comes in power and glory, the *House of David* through Christ will rule the whole world. Is it not consistent; then, that Christ has called one of *the House of David* to re-establish God's government in His Church? And, since Christ will rule "with a strong arm," might it also be significant that He chose one named "Arm strong" to re-establish the government of God in the Church in these last days?

### **Ambition sparked early in life**

At age 16, my first summer vacation employer away from home sparked in me the flame of AMBITION to make something of my life -- and with it, the willingness and determination to work hard and pay the price of success.

At age 18, a book called *Choosing a Vocation* put me through a self-analysis, leading to choosing the advertising profession.

I had developed an intense driving energy. I studied nights, learned by experience daytimes.

By age 25 I was well established with my own office in Chicago's downtown Loop as a successful publishers' representative in the banking field. My business contacts were with officers of the nation's great banks in South LaSalle Street and in Wall Street, New York -- and with presidents and board chairmen of many Midwest industrial corporations.

I was married at age 25 to the wife I was later to know God had selected for me -- a marriage that lasted 50 years -- until death did part us. She was the help I needed.

But the great flash depression of 1920 -- when I was 28 -- put my major clients (industrial corporations) into receivership. Ninety percent of my income was lost in the depression.

### **Conquered by Jesus Christ**

I had had a business training to be needed later in the Work of the living Christ. And I had become proud. God did not make His calling known to me at that stage. First, Christ took me through a humbling experience. By 1926 I was in Portland, Ore., reduced to poverty, hunger and threadbare clothes. Then a pair of supremely important challenges came. God's time had come to call me.

I was taken through the humiliating experience of finding that everything I had believed, or, perhaps better stated, taken for granted, about God and the Bible, was proved wrong. By spring, 1927, my mind had been swept clean of what religious beliefs I had carelessly assumed, and Jesus Christ had come into my life.

Self-confidence was replaced with a living FAITH. I was in desperate financial straits. I had taken a real beating. I had been CONQUERED by Christ Jesus, repentant, baptized and a totally new life begotten within me.

In the spring of 1927, I was baptized and had received the supreme gift of God's Holy Spirit. God's TRUTH was being opened to me. God had now called me and put me in His Work.

I was used by Jesus Christ, in 1933, in raising up the parent Church of the Worldwide Church of God. I had hitchhiked -- or walked -- to hold services in a one-room country schoolhouse eight miles west of Eugene, Ore. My one pair of shoes had holes in the soles. I said, in a sense of humor, "I have a suit for every day of the week -- and this is it!" My wife was wearing her younger sister's cast-off clothes. Our children had been sent to school hungry. It was then the midst of the Great Depression of 1929. Church brethren took up a collection to buy me a new suit of clothes.

### **By living faith**

But now GOD was using me! I had started on the air at cost of \$2.50 per week for radio time. The money came BY FAITH! Everything, from that time, came by living FAITH.

God gave miraculous answers to fervent prayer. The sick were being healed. Cancer victims were healed.

No operation could have started smaller. But God blessed it, and it grew at the rate of 30 percent per year for 35 years.

In 1947 God had used me in founding Ambassador College -- on sheer FAITH! The Church of God began to GROW -- steadily.

I had to realize God was dealing with me in principle, as He had dealt with Job. God allowed Satan to take away every material thing Job had, to bring him to God -- but then after Job was humbled and brought to repentance, God DOUBLED Job's former wealth -- and he had been the greatest and wealthiest man in the East.

Also my experience resembled that of the apostle Paul, in principle.

And now, after 46 years since the founding of the present era of the true Church of God, the ever-living Christ continues to give us severe tests of faith.

As God's Church, then named the Radio Church of God, began to grow, God led me to incorporate it in such a manner that I would always be UNABLE to profit financially from its growth.

### **From small beginnings**

It is doubtful whether any institution in human history started from as humble and small beginnings. When GOD starts something on His power alone, it is BIG from the beginning. For example, the creation of the UNIVERSE -- the creation of the earth. But when God starts something through humans, it usually, like the grain of mustard seed, starts the very smallest and most humble, and then grows as the spiritual character of the humans develops.

I had rejected a "salary" of \$3 per week, prior to the start of the Worldwide Church of God. As for me and my family, my beginning in God's service was almost nil financially. It was, indeed, a Work of FAITH. I trusted God in faith to supply the need. We paid \$5 per month house rent. I had to pay \$2.50 per week at the radio station -- *in advance* -- before every broadcast. God was supplying the need as He promised (Phil. 4:19).

One Sunday morning dawned without even the \$2.50 for the Sunday morning broadcast. My wife and I knelt in prayer, asking God to supply the need. I was aroused from prayer by a knock on the front door. A man at the door said, "Here's my tithe," and dashed off, saying he had to hurry for an appointment.

Another Sunday morning when I did not have the \$2.50 on hand, no one came to the front door. Yet, in faith, I started walking to the radio studio. On the way a man I did not know handed me the needed money.

I could give you the story of many other similar occurrences.

But after I was actively in God's Work, although it had to be carried on in living FAITH, we never again had to be hungry, without food -- although we often did have to eat beans and the least costly food. It was a financial struggle from the beginning. After moving to Eugene, we rented a house costing \$7 per month rent.

After two years, I was able to add a second radio station in Portland, costing \$10 per broadcast. Once, on starting to drive to Portland for the Sunday afternoon broadcast I lacked the \$10 I had to pay in advance. I stopped at Salem, Ore., for a 35-cent lunch, and somebody -- I do not now remember who -- handed me the needed broadcast money.

I was still going with one pair of shoes and one suit of clothes. But no longer hungry.

### **Good advice for a young man**

When I was 19 years of age, a multimillionaire called me to his office. He was starting me out as an employee of his corporation, entailing some long-distance rail travel. He wanted to give a young man some good advice.

"When you travel, always (when you can afford it) travel in a Pullman car. Always stay at the best hotel, even though it is well that you take their minimum-priced room. This throws you among the more successful people, and everyone we contact has an influence on us."

But when I had to stay overnight in Portland, or a year later in Seattle, Wash., I could not afford the best-quality hotel, so I stayed at second or third best. I always tried to live within my means.

A newspaper writer, in a story about the Worldwide Church of God, said he had learned that when royalty or overseas VIPs visited us in Pasadena, I did not take them to McDonald's or Jack-in-the-Box for lunch or dinner, but to Perino's (Los Angeles' best restaurant).

But royalty is accustomed to the best in quality, and it would be virtually an insult to take people of that stature to a lowest-price restaurant. If I had to fast without food a few days in order to afford to take such guests to the quality place to which they are accustomed, I would do it. I do take such guests to the type place they expect to be taken.

What would I have done, when I had to go to the lowest-price places myself and had only one pair of shoes, and one threadbare suit of clothes? Well, I did not have royalty or VIPs visiting me in those days. I probably would have been forced to find some way to avoid having to host them at all.

### **God promises to supply needs**

In train travel back in the 1920s, '30s and '40s, I traveled often in day coaches on trains and ate at low-priced lunch counters. But God has promised to supply all our need (Phil. 4:19), and in the Work of God in these days certain things are *necessary* in order to serve God -- and He provides what is needed.

I have never engaged in extravagance. Extravagance is defined in the dictionary as: "*extravagant*: exceeding the limits of reason, or necessity, extremely or exceedingly elaborate, profuse or unreasonably high in price."

The best quality of things may be expensive, but not extravagant.

The house in Pasadena, in which I have lived for some 13 years and is college owned, cost the college \$17,500.

At this point let me inject a little current news. Some of the dissidents who brought this civil lawsuit on God's Church spread the rumor that in fact this was not a suit against me or against the Church, but against Mr. Stanley Rader.

Of course, that is not true, for every effort in their power was-made to TAKE OVER AND CONFISCATE THE CHURCH PROPERTY -- to turn all management of the Church over to the court-appointed receiver, and they told the press it was brought against us because they claimed that both I and Mr. Rader had been "siphoning off millions of dollars every year from Church funds."

That wild and false allegation is so utterly false I have not considered it necessary to dignify it with a denial. Our Church membership have PROVED by their loyalty and financial support and loving letters that they know well such a thing is impossible.

A couple days ago Mr. Rader went in person to the deputy attorneys general, told them of this persistent rumor, and offered that if they would dismiss all charges against me and the three corporations, he would hand them complete records of all transactions involving him, on a silver platter.

They know well their charges of stealing millions of dollars are utterly groundless. But they replied that they cannot now afford to "lose face," by the admission that it is THEY, not us, who are guilty of wrongdoing. They said it would leave them "emasculated" -- using that very word! Now they are going to try to make me move to a lower-cost residence and insist I travel, when I do, at something like third class accommodations, etc.

So I am going to see that they learn:

- 1)** That I own absolutely NOTHING, except the property in which my wife and I now live in Tucson, Ariz., until it is safe for me to resume residence on the college campus in Pasadena.
- 2)** That the Pasadena property and all in it belong to Ambassador College and cost only \$17,500 of Church or college funds.

### **Example of God's blessings**

The very purchase of that property is an example of how God has been blessing us and His Work. When the college bought that property, Dr. and Mrs. Hal Lisman wanted to move from San Pedro, Calif., to Pasadena. They wanted this particular property, said it could be bought for \$37,500 -- a bargain of bargains at that time. They offered to put in the \$10,000 down payment. We agreed that \$5,000 of their down payment could pay for five years' rent and the other \$5,000 could be taken off their income tax as a contribution to the college.

At the end of five years, they paid another \$10,000 for another five years' rent. When Dr. Lisman died, Mrs. Lisman housed eight girl students. When neighbors complained that the property was not zoned for taking in roomers, we had to move them out. Mrs. Lisman felt it was too large a house for her to maintain alone.

That was when I decided to live there. After the Lismans had paid \$20,000 of the \$37,500, it remained for the college to pay only the \$17,500. There was a certain amount of repairing, which was done with our own labor.

My wife Loma and I lived there around two years before Loma's death. During the remainder of the night after her death, I remarked to my son Garner Ted that I planned to move into a small apartment, but said I didn't know how to use that home.

### **A student social center**

"Dad," said Ted, "no other minister but you could live here. It seems to me we'll have to turn it into a student social center."

I agreed, that was the only possible use. But then came the idea of having all senior students each year at a formal dinner. And, in doing that, I decided it would be better for me to live on there, keeping Rona Martin as housekeeper and cook. Many students yet today will say that the formal dinners they attended were the outstanding event of their four-year college career. Mrs. Armstrong had agreed to keep Rona for life.

That home has a bronze sign in front of the entrance, marked "PRIVATE -- Student Social Center."

So, if the deputy attorneys general decide I must live elsewhere, what will become of the Student Social Center?

### **Dignitaries entertained**

Among those who have been entertained in that house are King Leopold III and family, Judge Nagendra Singh, India's representative on the Court of International Justice at The Hague, Holland, and wife, Dr. Franz Josef Strauss, often called the "strong man of Europe," and wife, the president of Tokyo University and wife, officials from the State of Israel and others. Another guest was Gloria Swanson, the most glamorous star of Hollywood from the silent movie days (she was lecturing at the college)

Of course, IF these deputy attorneys general and these court judges demand that I move into some third or fourth-rate shanty, it would not be a new experience for me. I did have to live in poorer circumstances than most of our Church brethren for many years, and I would feel right at home.

When we moved to Pasadena in 1947, I had been living on very meager income and continued to live as frugally as possible for several years.

WHY IS IT? I often wonder, that if a Hollywood movie star lives ostentatiously, that is EXPECTED -- and they do nothing more of real value than entertain people. But if the servant of the living GOD ministers to multiple thousands, leading many to ETERNAL LIFE, some people expect him to live like a tramp or pauper.

### **How did Jesus live?**

How did Jesus live? We know little of that, but there is evidence that He owned His own property in Capernaum. He wore a robe that was of extra fine quality, for it was seamless. Even Jesus was accused of "extravagance," when a woman washed His feet with precious and expensive ointment. Jesus rebuked those who criticized this.

I know what it is to be POOR! I know what it is to go HUNGRY for lack of money for food. I have lived on as low a cost of living as my position in God's service allowed. And I would be willing to do it again -- BUT I don't think the living Jesus Christ wants me to do that again, now. In the Kingdom of God there will be no paupers, tramps or the VERY poor. Our God has something better in store for us!

## **Led by Jesus Christ**

For 52 years, now, since my conversion, I have tried to live simply, without extravagance, and to MAKE EVERY DOLLAR OF GOD'S TITHES GO AS FAR IN His WORK AS POSSIBLE! But the living Jesus Christ *does* guide His apostle and show me HOW *HE* WANTS HIS WORK MANAGED. Every dollar is made to go farther and more effectively than in any other work in the world -- BECAUSE THIS WORK IS HEADED AND LED BY JESUS CHRIST:

And it will continue to be administered as Jesus Christ leads me -- AND NOT AS SOME STATE OFFICIAL OR A COURT JUDGE WOULD MISmanage!

This is NOT the work of man's government, but THE WORK OF THE LIVING GOD! Attorney generals or court judges, who do NOT follow Christ *shall not* manage or operate this precious Work of the LIVING GOD!

Good News - April 1980

# **The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God**

*by Herbert W. Armstrong*  
*page 2 Good News April 1980*

## **Chapter One**

THE BEGINNING AND growth of the Worldwide CHURCH OF GOD is an exciting story of faith under hardship, opposition, persecution. It is a history bringing Jesus' parable of the mustard seed into real life in the turbulent 20th century. This mustard seed was born in the midst of the Great Depression.

What God has done through man in this world of Satan, He has always carried out through one man. Even before man, God put one archangel, Lucifer, over all angels on the earth.

When Satan's world had come to a population explosion, with violence, destruction, evils and consequent human suffering, God decided to SAVE all mankind from the agonies of universal sin in a manner understood by FEW. God decided to blot out all human life, except for eight souls, to bring them all back to life in a happier world millennia later, ruled by the Kingdom of God. God chose ONE MAN to keep humanity alive - Noah, and his family.

A few generations later God called ONE MAN, Abraham. Then Isaac, then Jacob, then Joseph.

Four hundred thirty years after Abraham, God chose Moses to lead Abraham's descendants out of Egyptian slavery, into the promised land. God had prepared Moses in advance, as a prince in the pharaoh's palace.

When Moses' job was finished, God chose ONE MAN, Joshua, to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River into their promised land.

The Israelites continually disobeyed God. When they got themselves into trouble, and became a vassal people under neighbor nations, God would raise up ONE MAN to lead them back, upon their repentance.

After this God chose ONE MAN, Samuel, by whom GOD would rule this people. But the people wanted a king like all other nations. God gave them Saul, then David and David's dynasty.

After Solomon's death, *the people* chose Jeroboam as king - but they had departed from God.

Meanwhile God had sent them prophets, one at a time. Israel became divided. Each kingdom was, in turn, conquered in war and removed from their promised land as slaves.

God was no longer ruling over either of the houses of Israel and Judah. But He did send a colony out of Judah, 70 years after Judah's captivity, to build a second temple, replacing Solomon's temple. And even then, *one man*, Zerubbabel, was governor and leader.

We come to the time of Jesus, the Christ. Jesus chose 12 to become His first apostles - but ONE MAN, Peter, was unquestionably the leader. Many do not realize this. But if you go through the "four gospels," the book of Acts and epistles of Paul, checking how often Peter is mentioned as leader, there is no doubt.

First notice Matthew 4:18 (Revised Standard Version), "As he [Jesus] walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon *who is called Peter* and Andrew..." Peter was not his original name from birth, but Simon. Jesus called him "Peter" - that is, "the Peter," or Pater or leader. This for centuries had been the TITLE of the religious LEADER. The Roman Catholics have adopted the title. In English we use the word *pope*, but in Rome the people call him *Papa*. It is also called Pater or Papa. In Rome I have heard crowds of thousands shouting out, when the pope appeared: "Viva Papa! Viva Papa! Viva Papa!" over and over in unison.

In Numbers 22:5, the king of the Moabites "sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor." Pethor was the center of Babylonian religion on the banks of the Euphrates. It compared to the Vatican today, which is a city but only as the Catholic religious center or capital. This originally was written in Hebrew and in Hebrew the *h* was not pronounced. Hence, Pethor becomes Pator or Peter - the *e* being pronounced as a long *a*.

*Peter*, then pronounced like *Pater*, was a long established TITLE, center or headquarters, of religious leadership - *not necessarily pagan*.

Now notice: The first place in the Bible where Peter is mentioned is Matthew 4:18, quoted above. The second place his name appears is Matthew 10:2, "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; *The first, Simon, who is called Peter* (or, who is called "the Peter")."

Notice, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, *Simon Barjona*" - that is, Simon the son of Jona, giving his name from birth (Matt. 16:17). "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter" - or, the Peter. Jesus was here giving him the TITLE of LEADERSHIP or apostolic HEAD under Christ.

Continue, verse 19: "And I will give *unto thee* [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou [Peter] shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou [Peter] shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I have given English derivations of the title *Peter*. Its Greek derivation means *rock*. The word in Matthew 16:18 in original Greek is *Petras* or *Petra*, meaning rock.

Peter is first mentioned in John's gospel. It speaks of "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother... first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona [John]: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" (John 1:40-42). Cephas (pronounced Kaphas) is the Aramaic equivalent of *petra* in the Greek, meaning a rock or stone. Cephas, then, also is the TITLE, not an original name.

You will find the titles, Peter and Cephas, and the man they represent, Simon, mentioned far more often in the four gospels and Acts than any other apostle. Paul used the title, or name, Peter, but once, in Galatians 1, otherwise always using the title Cephas.

I will mention only a couple more, here. In Acts 5:15 it was even Peter's shadow passing over people that healed them.

Christ chose Peter to *first* open up the Gospel to gentiles - Acts 10 and 11. Paul wrote, Galatians 1:18-19: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Then, Galatians 2:7, "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter..."

Yet when Paul went up to Jerusalem from Antioch (Acts 15), to settle the matter of circumcision among gentiles, it was PETER who gave the decision after much dissension (verses 7-12). James, as Jerusalem pastor, as a matter of protocol was chairman of the meeting, so James made Peter's decision official.

There is no doubt, Peter was the LEADER among the apostles - even, as in Acts 15, over Paul. He was Christ's chosen apostle.

Before leaving the subject of Peter, notice Mark 3:16, "And Simon he [Jesus] surnamed Peter." A surname, *Webster's Dictionary*, is "an added name derived from occupation or circumstance." Jesus had chosen Simon for the "occupation" of chief apostle. Peter - or Pater - had long been the title of a religious head or headquarters.

Since this bears on the relationship in the Church of God today, I dwell a little further on Jesus' choice of His chief apostle.

I quote briefly from the *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, revised edition, article "PETER": "Simon, surnamed Peter, has been justly called the Prince of the Apostles... Simon first met Jesus at Bethany beyond the Jordan (John 1:28)... Jesus was there... Jesus 'looked at him,' and he became a disciple from that moment. Jesus seemed to know at once both what Peter was then and what with God's help he could become, and He gave him a surname prophetic of the moral and spiritual strength he would eventually demonstrate. 'So you are Simon, the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (John 1:42). Cephas was the Aramaic equivalent of the Greek *petros* or *petra*, which means *rock*. It is thus given as a descriptive title, and not as a proper name. He was not yet *Peter*, but only Simon, impulsive and vacillating, and Jesus bestowed upon him the new name, before he had earned it so that it might be an incentive to him to realize what Jesus had expected."

In other words, Simon was human. He had his faults and weaknesses. But his ATTITUDE was right! His heart was in the right place. Even after being under Jesus' teaching 3½ years he denied Jesus three times. But Jesus helped him over his faults and weaknesses, and later having received the Holy Spirit, Simon Peter did, indeed, become a solid *rock* of an apostle.

So - in like manner - does God have to deal with all humans. The great prophet Elijah was "a man subject to like passions as we are" (Jas. 5:17). David was a man after God's own heart, yet he had weaknesses and sinned - but repented and turned *from* his sins. It has always been thus. It is today. Only one human was perfect - Jesus Christ.

## **Persecution, Church underground**

Soon, in the first century, a great persecution set in against the Church. Before A.D. 60 the churches in Galatia had turned to another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7).

The Gospel message God had sent by Jesus Christ had been suppressed!

The Church was largely scattered, many went "underground" - had to hold meetings on the Sabbath secretly.

By about A.D. 70, the Church of God entered "the lost century." For about a hundred years no trace of the history of the true Church of God could be found. This gave evidence that an organized thorough search had been made to destroy all historic evidence of the existence or activities of God's Church. The curtain had been brought completely down over all the records of Church activity.

When the curtain lifted, in the second century, a church calling itself "Christian" came into focus - but a totally *different* church. It was the Babylonian mystery religion, then calling itself "Christian," professing to be the true Church. Sunday was being observed early Sunday mornings instead of the Sabbath. Easter was being observed instead of the Passover.

However, a disciple of the apostle John, Polycarp, was contending with Roman bishops for the truth, and later an extremely heated controversy over these questions by Polycrates opposing Roman bishops.

Soon the "Trinity" doctrine was equally violent, and in A.D. 325 the Emperor Constantine of Rome called the Nicene Council and settled the controversies in favor of Sunday, Easter and the "Trinity."

About the middle of the 12th century, a businessman, Peter Waldo, of Lyons, France, rose up against the Roman Church, upholding the doctrines of the Scriptures. Waldo was eminent in learning and a philanthropist - one who practiced Christ's way of GIVING rather than Satan's way of GETTING. His work grew. The pope ordered him and his followers, called *Waldenses* exterminated. But Waldo fled.

The Church went underground, meeting secretly. Later Peter Waldo escaped to the mountains of Dauphiny. As the Church grew, its presence was known, and the pope ordered all their property, private and collective, confiscated through the government of France. Some fled to Spain. Peter Waldo continued to preach boldly for the truth. Many Waldenses were tortured and martyred. They form part of the martyred saints mentioned in Revelation 6:9-11.

Fuller accounts of the history of the true Church during these times are available. But now we pick up the story in the present century.

We come to the latter part of the era of the "Sardis Church" (Rev. 3:1-6) and the beginning of the Philadelphia era (Rev. 3:7-13).

The Sardis era of the Church had greatly deteriorated by 1927, when I was converted and first came on the scene, searching for the one true Church of God.

The Philadelphia era was to take on new life, vigor and vitality, restoring truths that had been lost.

Again God raised up one man through whom the living Christ would work. Since God called me and used me in an unusual manner, I deem it proper to outline here essential facts.

I did not know it as a young man, late teens, 20s and into my 30s, but God was guiding my life from birth.

Some of the things I shall record here have been published either in the *Autobiography* or in articles in *The Plain Truth* and *Good News* - but much has not been previously published.

I was born July 31, 1892, in Des Moines, Iowa, of respected and upright parents of Quaker ancestry. My ancestors had emigrated from England to Pennsylvania with William Penn, a hundred years before the United States became a nation. I have since learned of a foundation which has kept my ancestry, my father's, and his father's, all the way back to Edward I, king of England. Through the British Royal genealogy this ancestry is traced back to King David of Israel.

Thus I was born of the HOUSE OF DAVID, which has a certain biblical significance.

I well remember a grandfather, and a great-uncle, when I was age 3 - both of whom were between 92 and 94. And several uncles and aunts have lived into the 80s and 90s. My mother lived to be 95½.

As a boy and a youth I was normal and average. I was not a leader because my playmates were usually one or two years older than I. I was average in school, but always came up in final exams with near perfect grades.

At age 16, on my first summer vacation job away from Des Moines, my employer aroused the flame of ambition within me, due to work well performed. From that summer I had a burning desire to become a success in life. I did not crave money, but I did crave the satisfaction of accomplishment and true success.

At age 18 I put myself through a home-study course of self-analysis, and a survey of occupations and professions, to avoid ever becoming the proverbial "square peg in a round hole." I had come to realize by then that most people are victims of circumstance. Few ever *plan* where they belong, where they live, what they do. I wanted to PLAN my life for satisfying achievement.

The test led me into the advertising profession. From infancy I had been brought up in the First Friends Church of Des Moines. But I had never come to have any special religious interest. I had absorbed certain religious ideas or taken for granted beliefs taught me, but I had no burning interest in religion. At 18, launching into a business career, I dropped out of church attendance.

In business, I always chose the job where I would learn the most, as well as throw me into contact with successful men.

I worked hard. I studied diligently, burning "the midnight oil" as the saying went, instead of seeking pleasure and entertainment of evenings.

By age 23 I had become a publishers' representative, with the advertising representation of the nine principal and dominant bankers' magazines in the nation. I had my own office in Chicago's loop for seven years. I was unusually successful, using methods that were unique, pioneering in opinion surveys.

I had personal contact with presidents and board chairmen of such corporations as Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., J.I. Case, Moline Plow, John Deere & Co., Avery Co. and many others. I attended state and national bankers' conventions. I had personal acquaintance with heads of the nation's largest banks, both Wall Street, New York and Chicago.

I was married at age 25 to Miss Loma Dillon. I was to learn later that God had brought us together, for a marriage to last 50 years, until her death at age 75½.

Loma was much more interested in religion and the Bible. She had been a Methodist, but was also of Quaker ancestry.

Within a week of our marriage my wife was shaken by a dream so unusual she was frightened. She dreamed of being on one of Chicago's busiest intersections. An angel had come down and put his arms around my wife and me, as thousands stopped to see the sight. My wife was struck with fear, knowing I had no special religious interest at the time. The angel in the dream said Jesus was returning in this generation, and He had work for us to do.

When my wife told me of the dream, I was embarrassed. I suggested she tell the dream to the preacher of the church on the next corner, and perhaps he could tell her if it meant anything. I wanted to dismiss it from my mind, at the time.

It was to be nine years before Christ jarred me with a call I could not escape.

But I was eminently successful for a young man, making what, measured by the 1980 dollar value, would be about \$175,000 per year while still in my 20s.

All these years of business experience prepared me for Christ's call. I had been energetic. I had learned to THINK about what I was doing, *while* I was doing it. I had learned to think my way around unusual circumstances - to apply resourcefulness to arising problems. I had learned to deal with men.

In the autumn of 1926, when I was 34, my wife brought to me what at the moment was a terrifying CHALLENGE! I have told of this experience and published it so many times, I will skim through it here. She had begun to keep the seventh-day Sabbath! To me, then, that was "religious fanaticism." Also a sister-in-law challenged me on the theory of evolution. I have published the story repeatedly of the night-and-day research in-depth, trying to prove both of them wrong.

The important thing is that in this study Jesus Christ, through His written Word, opened my mind to the PRIME BASIC TRUTHS He wanted me to have in starting me out as His servant.

Basic in God's master plan for His PURPOSE through humans is the restoration of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! God had established His government on earth through Lucifer and the angels. They had rebelled. God's government was no longer administered on earth.

Every government, even man's government, is based on a foundational LAW or constitution. The LAW of God is the principle and expansion of LOVE. Love is *outflowing*, the opposite of ingrasping lust, greed, coveting. For humans, it expands into LOVE toward God and LOVE toward fellow man. That, in turn, expands, in principle, into the Ten Commandments. Of the Ten, the Fourth is the *test* Commandment.

Humans will agree that transgression of any of the other nine is SIN. But men will *not* accept the Fourth, or admit that its transgression is SIN! There is one, and only one reason for any person to accept and obey the Fourth Commandment - keeping God's Sabbath holy. And that is to express love for and obedience to God.

Jesus Christ brought me to Him through a challenge on this Fourth Commandment. God had made a call I first did not recognize through my wife, only days after our marriage. I didn't "get the message" then. He now called me in a manner I could not shrug off, *through my wife!* He used her in my conversion - in bringing me to Him. And He used her as a partner with me in establishing His growing Work through His Church in the era of this *end time!*

God's TIME had come! His time for one, of whom John the Baptist was type and forerunner, to prepare the way for Christ's SECOND coming. For one of whom Zerubbabel, in building the *second* temple at Jerusalem, was type and forerunner, of one through whom Christ would build this era of God's CHURCH - the spiritual TEMPLE to which Christ will come the *second* time to RULE and RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Jesus Christ used this *test Commandment* of the LAW of His government in order to bring me to Him and into His service!

That was first and most important. But more - during that initial six months' in-depth study, Christ made plain to me the NAME of the true Church. He revealed to me the TRUTH about the "lost sheep" of the house of ISRAEL - the modern identity of which is the KEY that unlocked that whole THIRD of the Bible which is PROPHECY for NOW!

More, and also basically, He revealed to me the truth of the existence of angels under Lucifer. This was basically important because it opened my mind to the BACKGROUND making clear God's PURPOSE in creating MAN on the earth. Also He revealed God's annual Holy Days, which depict God's master plan.

Thus Jesus Christ, Head of God's Church, started His servant out with the basic foundation to UNDERSTANDING of Christ's GOSPEL. And further, He revealed that GOSPEL which had not been proclaimed to the world for 18½ centuries.

ALWAYS God, in using MAN, has dealt through ONE MAN at a time. He has not used committees or groups. True, there was more than one apostle used in the founding of God's CHURCH, but one man, PETER, clearly was LEADER.

The Bible is constructed like a jigsaw puzzle. One must pick out a piece here and a piece there, each within the meaning of its context, and then put them together in order to see the WHOLE picture. But, in and during my conversion, Christ revealed to me the *basic* truths, and it was thereafter easier to accept and build the others around them.

In this conversion process, Jesus put me through the wringer. He squeezed out - cleared my mind - swept it clean of earlier false assumptions - such as going to heaven or hell - immortality of the soul - the false "Trinity" doctrine.

I was started out knowing WHO and WHAT God is - WHAT, and WHY man is - the TRUTH about Israel - WHAT IS Christ's true Gospel - the coming Kingdom of God. Those are the BASICS, unknown by ANY religion, or any(other) of the sects and denominations of "Christianity."

HOW WONDERFUL ARE GOD'S WAYS!

I did not seek these basic foundations of TRUTH of my own volition! Jesus Christ revealed them, *while I was trying to prove the very opposite of these precious TRUTHS!*

But the living Jesus did sweep my mind CLEAN of false teachings and fables - of so-called "Christianity" - of evolution - of all foundational beliefs.

He was preparing one called and chosen by God, even against that one's will, for an important service in RESTORING THE LAW AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD to earth - even in the comparatively small Worldwide Church of God. He was preparing one whom HE conquered and brought to repentance and faith, for this great END-TIME commission!

Yet, in the earliest days of my Christian life after conversion, the ministers of the *then* only true Church of God, Sardis, fought me at every turn. Christ led me through continual PERSECUTION and OPPOSITION.

And, much later on - during the decade of the '70s, conspiracies arose within God's Church to DO AWAY WITH these basic truths. During the years 1968 and 1969, and the '70s up to 1977, I was overseas much of the time. During 1975 and 1976 I was overseas 300 out of the 365 days of those years - and the two or three years before about 200 to 250 days.

Those "intellectuals" surrounding my son, who was left to administer the Work from Pasadena headquarters, were conspiring to *liberalize* Church doctrines, to destroy and remove from circulation the articles, booklets, etc., I had written on BASIC TRUTHS. The Church of God was being molded more and more like a liberal Protestant denomination.

Satan never lets up! Church leaders had become DECEIVED! Finally, by 1977, a voluminous project, called the Systematic Theological Project (STP), was prepared in scholarly and systematic "university" style. It was prepared principally by those educated in this world's universities. It was prepared SECRETLY - those involved were warned not to let a word of it leak to me. It was given out to the entire field ministry at the ministers' conference in January, 1977, after I had been given solemn assurances nothing doctrinal would be brought up in the conference.

Later, in 1977, on learning of this conspiracy, I killed the project.

But let me say before leaving this most recent conspiracy, my son, as executive vice president, was surrounded and influenced by a group of liberal conspirators, all of whom had been receiving a large part or all of their "education" in this world's universities, where the "god" is evolution, and liberalism is the universal

approach. Most, if not all, of the infamous STP was produced by one with a background of universities in New York, Washington and Los Angeles, and with a Ph.D. I do not accuse these men of dishonesty - they had been brainwashed by this world's much deceived "higher education" and "scholarship."

Now back to the early days with the "Sardis" era Church.

*(To be continued)*

**Good News - May 1980**

# **The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God**

*by Herbert W. Armstrong  
page 2 Good News May 1980*

## **Chapter Two**

THE BEGINNING AND growth of this era of the true Church of God is the story of a beginning amid the very depth of the worst economic depression within the memory of man today. Its beginning was humble and small beyond compare. Its growth unmatched among institutions and organizations of our day. Its methods unique in a modern world.

This entire Work has belied human experience. It has reversed accepted procedures. Yet I must hasten to add, none of these were of my devising.

In a word, it is the story of what the living CHRIST can do - has done, and is doing - through a very average human instrument, whom He had brought to humble submission and whose eyes He opened to amazing TRUTHS!

Chapter 1 showed how God always has done whatever He has done with and through mankind by and through ONE MAN at a time. Chapter 1 explained how the living Christ prepared His chosen apostle of this time.

The time was the autumn of 1926 to spring of 1927. My conversion and baptism was in the spring of 1927. But the parent church of the present Worldwide Church of God was not established until autumn, 1933 - in the very depth of the worst depression of the century.

In my business as a publishers' representative in Chicago, Ill., I had made, while still in my 20s, an annual income equal to \$175,000 based on the 1980 value of the dollar.

He had been preparing me. Now He proceeded in further preparation. I had been vigorous, aggressive, successful. But this had made me self-confident, cocky,

conceited. God had to reduce that to humility, and self-confidence had to be supplanted by FAITH in Christ.

So, in the flash depression of 1920, He took away my business - all but a most meager income. Customers such as the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., Moline Plow Works, Avery Co., Dalton Adding Machine Co. - others - all went into receivership. All my larger advertising contracts were canceled.

I held on for two more years, then went to Iowa, where I put on surveys of local business conditions for daily newspapers.

In 1924 we moved to Oregon. There I developed a successful advertising service for laundries. Every leading laundry from Eugene, Ore., to Seattle and Everett, Wash., and also in Wenatchee, Spokane, and Walla Walla, Wash., had become clients. The laundry industry was 11th largest in the nation yet the most backward.

My service, combined with internal efficiency-management service, was doubling and tripling the business volume of clients. Then a cooperative national advertising campaign inaugurated by the Laundryowners' National Association took my business by forces totally beyond my knowledge or control. I came to know later that, in fact, it was God taking away my business, reducing me to poverty and even hunger, preparing me for the dual challenges and intensive biblical studies that resulted in my conversion.

It was while we were visiting my parents in Salem that a neighbor lady, Mrs. Ora J. Runcorn, opened my wife's eyes to the truth of God's Sabbath. I had no love for that neighbor lady at first.

But, once my in-depth study had proved to me that I was wrong, I was converted and baptized, my dislike for that lady turned to an affectionate warmth in which my wife and I looked on her and her husband as almost our "parents-in-the-Lord."

I was so filled with these new biblical truths - and thrilled - that immediately I began writing in article form various truths I had found.

The Runcorns - our "spiritual parents" - were members of the Church of God, Seventh Day, with headquarters at Stanberry, Mo. I had studied completely their *Bible Home Instructor*, and I began submitting some of my articles for publication in their church weekly, *The Bible Advocate*. My articles began to appear, beginning on the front cover.

Through the Runcorns we met other Church of God brethren in Salem and farther south in the Willamette River valley. However, I did not join with them. They were so small, so uneducated, except for their limited amount of "Sabbath-keeping" Bible knowledge - and their work, as I found, so ineffective and unproductive, I could not believe they could be God's one and only true Church.

I had learned in my biblical studies, how Jesus said the gates of the grave would never prevail against His true Church. I knew that Church had to exist - but

WHERE? I had learned it had to be a Sabbath-keeping Church. That limited it to this Stanberry headquartered Church, the Seventh-day Adventists and the Seventh-day Baptists. But also I had seen the NAME of the true Church 12 times in the New Testament, as the CHURCH OF GOD. And Jesus said He had kept His disciples in the Father's name and prayed the Church would be held together by that name.

Incidentally, I have never been a member of the Seventh-day Adventists - never even attended one of their regular Sabbath services. I mention this only because in the past the rumor had been spread that I formerly was an Adventist.

But my search for the one true Church was now narrowed to this one Church, the Church of God, Seventh Day, with a headquarters small publishing place in Stanberry, Mo. Yet I could not then reconcile myself to believing a church so small, so fruitless, with an uneducated ministry, could be God's one and only true Church. Of course, I was newly converted. I suppose I assumed the true Church would be a large and powerful Church. Yet I had noticed Jesus called His followers "the little flock," and I had seen two different churches depicted in the book of Revelation - one large, powerful, ruling governments and called a "great whore," and the other small and persecuted and having to flee for safety.

I later learned that this, in the late 1920s, was only the remnant of the formerly more effective Church of the "Sardis" era (Rev. 3:1-6).

I think it was in the autumn of 1927 the Runcorns invited us to go with them to a meeting to be held in a schoolhouse south of Salem in the Willamette Valley.

We went with them to this meeting. Lunch was served under a large tree outdoors. I was asked to give the blessing on the food. It was the first time in my life I had ever prayed before others - but God helped me so they did not know it was a first prayer before others.

I had been asked previously to speak before these people, but had declined. Being a preacher was the *last* thing I wanted to be. But now I had discovered a special Sabbath covenant, binding for ever, in Exodus 31:12-18. I knew this, as a binding covenant, was unknown to them. I could not withhold from them what I had discovered, so I accepted their invitation this time.

It was the first "sermon" - if it could be called that - of my life. But it met great enthusiasm from those brethren, and I was invited to another meeting a month later.

This is when the persecution - from their ministers - got into red-hot action. Their brethren all loved me from the first. But not their preachers. This time their nearest minister, stationed in Idaho, was on hand to refute whatever I said. It was an all-day meeting. This minister managed for me to speak in the morning, so he could refute me in the afternoon.

In August that year, 1927, my wife had been suddenly and completely healed by prayer and anointing, of quinsy (a swelled lump in her throat so she could not swallow food or water), blood poisoning, a dog bite and one or two other things.

A doctor had said she could not live another 24 hours. She had not had any sleep for 72 hours, or food or water. As a result, I had thoroughly studied what the Bible revealed about healing, and I had the subject well in hand.

At this second meeting with these "Sardis" people, I preached in the morning about God's promise to heal. But in the afternoon, the minister from Idaho vehemently attacked my sermon. He quoted the scripture saying many would come saying they had done many wonderful works in Jesus' name, but He would reply, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). Of course he *twisted* this scripture out of context.

My first encounter with a Stanberry minister had been in the spring of 1927 - the first of their ministers I had seen. He, too, had little or no education, but a dominant and argumentative personality. He was staying at the home of another member in Salem, a Mrs. Gross. That was when I was studying the question of baptism. I had completed the Sabbath study, had learned of the annual Holy Days, the preexistence of angels on earth, the presence of Satan as the former Lucifer, the identity of the United States and Britain as the birthright tribes of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and other BASIC truths the Stanberry-based church did not know.

But I had been raised in the Quaker church, which does not believe in water baptism. Therefore I was studying the question of baptism, for I was ready to be baptized. I had gone to a minister of the Friends' Church (Quaker), and, with my knowledge of the subject from my very recent study, had caused him to admit his church was teaching contrary to the Bible on the subject.

But now I wanted to talk to a minister of the Church of God about it. I went over to the Gross home and told this minister I was a candidate for baptism and would like to talk with him about it.

"I haven't any time to waste on an unbaptized man," he said, insultingly. "I will be giving a public lecture on baptism at the Seventh-day Adventist church tomorrow afternoon. If you want to know anything about baptism, come to the lecture." I was taken aback at his gruff, insulting manner.

"Why, you talk as if I were some kind of a heathen and not a Christian," I said.

"I *know you* are not a Christian!" he retorted angrily. "Anyone who has not been baptized is not a Christian!"

"Well," I said meekly, "maybe you're right, but I would never say such a thing about you or any other man, and I'm glad that you are not my judge."

I attended his lecture, but learned nothing new. I had no occasion to speak to the man at the meeting. The Adventists had given him permission to use their church house for a week-day meeting.

Late in 1927 a young minister came to Oregon from Stanberry. He called on me, since my articles had been appearing as lead cover articles in *The Bible Advocate*.

He seemed friendly, yet there was a definite hostility underneath. Soon my articles were rejected at Stanberry.

Meanwhile I had learned of a small group of about 10 members that met together for Sabbath-school study each Sabbath in Oregon City. They were poor, uneducated, except for one man, elderly Mr. G.A. Hobbs, 82 years of age. He was 82, stern and peppery, strict for orderly procedures. Yet despite his peppery exterior, he had a heart of love and became very fond of me.

I had begun attending with this tiny group in Oregon City, and they had asked me to be their teacher. I did not preach, but just in ordinary conversation expounded the Scriptures to them.

When Mr. Hobbs heard *The Bible Advocate* had rejected my articles on recommendation of this young minister, he wrote them a scorching hot letter of protest, and my articles were reinstated.

However, this young minister, Roy Daily, and I did, over the next few years, especially in 1931, work together. He had become more friendly as we got to know each other.

Things continued about as I have described for the next three years.

Our firstborn son, Richard David "Dick," was born Oct. 13, 1928. That was the happiest day of my life. I had waited 12 years for a son, though God had given us two daughters.

Things were getting tougher for me and my family through 1927 and 1928 and 1929. God knew I needed much more humbling, and He did it economically. I had not realized it, but my false god, from 18 years on, had been to achieve SUCCESS in business. I did not crave money as such. I did want to be a SUCCESS - and this world measures "success" by what a man accumulates, as well as by accomplishment.

But meanwhile, my Bible study continued, and I was accumulating much more knowledge and Bible UNDERSTANDING. The year 1928 had been a year of great progress in my life SPIRITUALLY!

The year 1929 was a crucial year! It was a year of tremendous activity in WORLD EVENTS. On June 7, 1929, the papal state in Rome, extinct since 1870, was revived as a state or nation - the Vatican. The great stock market crash occurred Oct. 29. That was the start of the most severe economic depression the United States had ever experienced. It was a year of going actually HUNGRY for us. It was in late January of 1930 that I learned the lesson of FASTING and prayer, with such miraculous answers to prayer. I have published this before and will not take space for it here.

Our second son, and fourth child, was born Feb. 9. And to THINK! Garner Ted has now passed the HALF-CENTURY mark - past 50 years of age! Unbelievable! And today, as I write, is his 50th birthday. I pray very earnestly for him every day, and God is going to answer my prayers! He was born on a Sunday.

During these years, my FAITH had increased, the faith OF Jesus Christ, which God GAVE me through His Holy Spirit. There were many miraculous answers to prayer, especially just before Ted's birth, and his healing of being born dumb, by prayer and the laying on of my hands after he was past 2 years old.

It was in November, 1930, that the Runcorns asked my wife and me to accompany them to a business meeting of the Church down in the Willamette Valley, at the home of Mrs. Ira E. Curtis. The Church in Oregon was being divided. One group, in which were the Runcorns and Mr. Hobbs, were opposing Andrew N. Dugger, who had been the head minister at Stanberry.

At this meeting, they asked me to act as secretary and take down the minutes of the meeting, though I had never joined the Church.

At this meeting, the strife between the two divisions became heated. Tempers were flaring. It was rapidly moving into an angry fistfight.

Quickly I rose to my feet. In a loud but calm voice I asked if I might say a word. I was but a guest, but I said we were all Sabbath keepers and Satan was angry. I was going to drop to my knees and ask God to restrain Satan from our midst, and said they could kneel too, if they wished. I knelt immediately, and beseeched God to give us peace and rebuke Satan. When I rose, all the fight had gone out of them.

They asked me, before leaving, if I would conduct an evangelistic campaign for them in a church at Harrisburg, Ore. I told them I would have 11 nights free beginning Sunday night, Dec. 21. But I had never preached before the public. I said I would do it if they would agree to each spend ONE HOUR in solid prayer for these meetings, beginning then, until the meetings were over.

I don't think they had all spent that much time in prayer daily, but it was too embarrassing for them to refuse.

The ones who wanted to withdraw their tithes from Stanberry proceeded immediately to incorporate as the Oregon Conference. Mr. G.A. Hobbs was president and Mr. Runcorn vice president.

I held the 11-night campaign. The small church they hired for the 11 nights seated about 150, and we had about 100 in attendance. I designed a good-sized circular, had it printed, and brethren circulated it throughout a 5-mile radius of Harrisburg.

God gave me four new conversions in the 11 nights' meetings.

But what would I do about baptizing them? I was not yet an ordained minister. Yet I knew Jesus had said, in the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them..." Those who did the teaching were to baptize. The young minister, Roy Daily, was at the time in a hospital. I conferred with him, and he agreed I should do the baptizing.

Good old peppery brother Hobbs scolded me real good for the baptizing, saying it should have been taken up "with the authorities." But my wife silenced him and we all laughed.

That was my first evangelistic effort, and first preaching to the public.

God did not induct me into His ministry as an imposing pompous figure of superior position in the ministry. Rather, I was a good deal like the apostle Paul, who wrote to the Corinthian church: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom... and I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (I Cor. 2:1, 3). I was no VIP entering Christ's ministry.

From the very first, in my association with these Sardis brethren, I was treated by their ministers as the greenhorn tail-ender. The Sardis brethren all loved me. But their jealous ministers used every device constantly to humiliate me and persecute. God blessed my efforts to produce "fruit," but their efforts produced none! But all this was what God knew I needed. I did not come into the seat where God has now put me by playing politics or jerking the rug out from under one higher up than I. Yet I have seen this type of politics played in God's Work ever since my conversion, 53 years ago.

In the early summer of 1931 a former Seventh-day Adventist minister, Robert L. Taylor, moved to Oregon from Southern California. The brethren of the Oregon Conference were swept off their feet by him. They said he was a better speaker than any from Stanberry. The Oregon Conference brethren wanted to team Mr. Taylor and me together to hold a tent meeting in Eugene. Mr. Taylor welcomed the idea. I had now been preaching for 3 and one half years and my whole heart was in it. Being ordained by the Oregon Conference was the most momentous occasion of my life. I was ordained at an all-day meeting in June. I do not remember the date, but it could have been at or very near Pentecost.

This, as I wrote in the *Autobiography*, brings us to a series of almost incredible facts! Certainly this strange chain of circumstances was not of *my* planning.

First, Jesus Christ began His earthly ministry at about age 30. The year was A.D. 27. That was the time when He began calling and training His first apostles.

When I was 30 Christ began His call to me by taking away my business in Chicago. All my principal clients went into receivership. Christ was to put me into His service later, but He began taking my business life away, in preparation, when I was 30.

Second, Jesus began the actual teaching and training of the original apostles in that year, A.D. 27. Precisely 100 time cycles later, 1927, I was baptized and my intensive study, following baptism, for Christ's ministry, started.

Now what is significant about 100 time cycles? God set the earth, sun and moon in space, among other reasons, *to mark out spaces of time!* One revolution of the earth, measured by the sun, is *a day*. God counts a day as ending at sunset on the earth. One revolution of the moon around the earth is a lunar month,

according to God's sacred calendar. One revolution of the earth around the sun is a solar year.

But the earth, moon and sun come into almost exact conjunction every 19 years.

Nineteen years marks off one complete time cycle, as God measures time!

The actual ordination, or endowment of power for the Gospel ministry of the original apostles, occurred after 3½ years, at the time of Pentecost. A.D. 31.

Also, after 3½ years of preliminary ministerial training, 100 time cycles later, A.D. 1931, Jesus Christ had me ordained and for the first time put full time into the Work of Christ's Gospel, at the very time of Pentecost, June, 1931.

One fact more.

God has said: "The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first [in the latter days - now just ahead of us], that *the glory of the house of David* and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. *In that day [now soon to come]...* he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and *the house of David shall be as God*, as the angel [messenger] of the LORD before them... And I will pour *upon the house of David...* the spirit of grace" (Zech. 12:7-10).

Plainly the apostle (one sent forth - or messenger of God) God would use in these perilous last days would be of the HOUSE OF DAVID. The house of David is NOT one of the tribes - but those individuals descended from David.

I have mentioned that some years ago I was contacted by a foundation, formed for the purpose of maintaining the genealogy of a certain family. My great-grandfather Armstrong, who had a biblical name, father of my grandfather Nathan Armstrong, had married into this family. So the foundation has my genealogy back to the kings of France, and King Edward I of England. The genealogy of the royal family of Britain carries every generation back to King David of ancient Israel. THEREFORE GOD HAS PRESERVED MY ANCESTRY EVERY GENERATION FROM DAVID, AND I AM *OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID!*

Plainly, in THESE tumultuous last days, God would raise up one who would KNOW he is of THE HOUSE OF DAVID, as Christ's chosen apostle and messenger to the KINGS OF THE EARTH, to carry the TRUE MESSAGE of Christ's Gospel, which was suppressed from the world from midcentury 1 to the middle of the 20th century.

While I began proclaiming the true Gospel in 1931, it did not reach Europe and Britain until 1953, on Jan. 7.

SO, ONE MORE ASTOUNDING FACT - IT WAS PRECISELY 100 TIME CYCLES - A.D. 53 to A.D. 1953 that THE TRUE GOSPEL WAS SUPPRESSED!

But even that is not all!

In Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel was governor and BUILDER of the second temple in Jerusalem to which Christ came at His first coming. But read again in chapters 2 and 3 of Haggai and the first four chapters of Zechariah! The real MESSAGE is about OUR TIME, NOW - the LAST DAYS! The time when God will "shake all nations," Haggai 2:7 and verse 9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former" (Solomon's temple). The physical temple built by Zerubbabel was nowhere near as glorious as Solomon's temple. It is speaking of the TEMPLE to which Christ shall come at His SECOND COMING - soon now - the SPIRITUAL Temple, the CHURCH, which Christ shall marry at His coming, when the Church shall be made SPIRIT and IMMORTAL in GLORY!

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus' first coming. He was the messenger in the PHYSICAL wilderness of the Jordan River, preparing for the HUMAN Jesus coming to the MATERIAL temple of stone and to the PHYSICAL people of Judah, ANNOUNCING that some 100 time cycles later, He would establish the immortal KINGDOM OF GOD on earth. But read, in Malachi 3, not only verse 1, referring to John the Baptist typically, but verses 1-5, speaking of His SECOND COMING. WHO is to be the messenger in the SPIRITUAL wilderness of the 20th century religious confusion - spiritual confusion - who was to prepare the SPIRITUAL temple, the Church, for the coming of the glorified SPIRITUAL Christ of all POWER AND GLORY - coming to His SPIRITUAL Temple - the Church of God - and not to announce, but to actually ESTABLISH on earth the spiritual KINGDOM OF GOD?

All these things shout a message to God's Church today!

There definitely *IS* a 19-year time cycle. It CANNOT be used to prognosticate or foretell future events, but it is a *fact* that *has HAPPENED!*

Read this over again. Think this over soberly! It gives you PROOF that we are the one and only true Church of God for these latter days!

More next month, as I continue with my experiences with the Sardis Church and the foundation of the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD!

*(To be continued)*

Good News - June/July 1980

# **The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God**

*by Herbert W. Armstrong*  
*page 2 Good News June/July 1980*

## **Chapter Three**

I was ordained at or near the day of Pentecost, 1931. It was June. The Oregon Conference had a small tent. Robert L. Taylor and I took it to Eugene, Ore., and we placed it in a vacant lot on West 10th Avenue. I engaged an upstairs room in a house across the street, with a small kitchenette. I provided my own food while there.

We placed a small platform at the front of the little tent and managed to set 50 folding chairs. That is all - just 50!

I must have gotten out some kind of handbills or advertising in a newspaper - what, I do not now remember.

Our campaign was to last six weeks, six nights a week, skipping Saturday nights. We had the 50 seats filled most of the time.

Mr. Taylor and I alternated preaching every other night. The first night I emceed and led a song service. He preached.

When we had lived in Portland, Ore., I had gained some little experience with "Pentecostal" people. Yet at that time I really knew little about them. I was somewhat overawed by their "speaking in tongues," their glib "testimony" about how Jesus had blessed them. I did not really understand it yet. But one thing I had noticed, they had no desire to keep God's commandments, and they had no real biblical knowledge. There were a certain number of verses - or parts of verses - that they had memorized, but always putting on them a meaning totally contrary to the intended meaning in the context.

The Oregon Conference brethren were definitely against this "tongues" movement, especially a Mr. J.J. McGill, a big 6-foot-4-inch man with a husky frame. Mr. Taylor had been questioned about this, for those brethren wanted none of that in the Church. Mr. Taylor had solemnly assured them he was totally opposed to it.

As the meetings wore on, I noticed two couples of Pentecostals attending, and gradually, when he was speaking, Mr. Taylor encouraged their loud "Amens" and "Praise the Lords" and "Glory Hallelujahs." I began to be suspicious.

There was no sign of any real results in our meetings, and that was discouraging. One night a real storm blew in. Mr. Taylor and I went over to drive the tent stakes in deeper, lest the tent be blown away. No one came, but one couple, who drove up as we were driving deeper the tent stakes. Mr. Taylor said he was going home - no one was coming.

I said to this couple, it was a shame to have driven in - they had come six miles - in such a storm, and then have no service. I asked them if they would care to come across the street to my room, where it would be dry and warm, and we could at least have a Bible study.

They came. They gave the appearance of being a very "poor" couple. He certainly was not handsome (for that matter neither was Abraham Lincoln), and she was

not beautiful. I felt sorry for them. But later I learned he was the most successful farmer around!

Mrs. Margaret Fisher asked me, when we reached my room, if I would explain the Sabbath to them. Her husband Elmer believed we should keep it, but she said, "All these churches can't be wrong." "Why," I replied, "that's precisely what I said to my wife when she began keeping the Sabbath. That's the question that resulted in my conversion. I'll be delighted to explain it." I did, she accepted it, and thereby, unknown to me at the time, *began* the first convert of the Worldwide Church of God! The Fishers were to mean much to the start and founding of God's true Church of our time!

And, incidentally, this was the SOLE FRUIT borne by our six weeks' campaign - when Mr. Taylor was not with me. God NEVER BLESSED ANY EFFORTS WHEN I TEAMED WITH ANY SARDIS MEN!

In due time I learned that R.L. Taylor was, always had been, Pentecostal.

Once he told me I was not "spiritual" enough. He asked me to go with him to an all-night "tarry meeting," so I could get (notice that word *GET*) my "baptism."

I said I preferred to follow Jesus' example and His teaching, to go to a solitary place or into a small closet and pray ALONE!

"You'll never get your baptism that way, brother!" he said sternly and rebukingly.

"Then it's something I don't want," I said.

The six-weeks tent meeting ended with no results, except the night with the Fishers in my room.

Meanwhile Mr. Taylor had brought up the idea of building a small local church building. He felt he could carry on and build up a church. He induced the Oregon Conference to buy a 50-foot-wide lot, then a half block outside city limits at the end of West Eighth Street.

It now developed that Mr. Taylor had not so recently arrived from Southern California, as he had led us to believe. He had been in the retail lumber business in Eugene and had failed. He had a small amount of lumber left on hand - not enough, as I remember, to finish the building of the small church. But he would donate the lumber. Of course he maneuvered to have the property deeded in his name.

The Oregon Conference decided now to team me up with this young minister, Roy Daily. There was "an interest" (to use their expression) up in St. Helens, Ore., 25 miles north of Portland on the west bank of the Columbia River. It turned out that the "interest" there was one woman who was filled with so much zeal she made the church officials think a few dozen people were prospective members.

I bought a half page in the St. Helens newspaper, announcing the meetings. One couple came one night only. Mr. Daily "preached" a full sermon in loud preachy tone at this couple. They never came back.

Then Roy and I went over to Umapine in far eastern Oregon, near Walla Walla, Wash. Roy knew of a member there, a Mr. Preston. He felt we could draw a crowd there.

We drove over, rented a hall, advertised, started a meeting. Roy and I slept in the same bed in the Prestons' spare room. About 35 to 50 came to our service the first two or three nights. Then attendance increased.

After about two weeks of these meetings, a letter came from Mrs. Florence Curtis, secretary of the state conference, saying the treasury was almost empty, and a meeting had been called a couple days after we received the letter to decide what to do. The conference was employing Mr. Taylor as well as Mr. Daily and me, each at \$20 per week salary.

"I'm driving back for that business meeting," said Roy, "starting at 5:30 tomorrow morning."

"But Roy," I exclaimed, "we have a campaign going, with increasing attendance!"

"I'm not concerned about that," answered Mr. Daily. "That board will let you and me out and keep Mr. Taylor on, since they can no longer keep all three of us. I'm going back and fight for my own interests!"

I simply could not understand that kind of reasoning. To me, the Work of God came first, not protecting my personal interest.

Nevertheless, at 5:30 sharp next morning Roy started driving back alone. I was left alone to finish the campaign. Now interest in the campaign took on new life. The attendance increased. I had five new conversions and baptisms.

By now I had begun to notice that when I worked alone God blessed my efforts and spiritual fruit was borne. But I noticed that not one of the Sardis ministers ever produced a convert. I asked some older members in the church, and not one of them could remember of a single new convert ever having resulted from the work of one of those ministers.

Had they, themselves, been converted and had God's Holy Spirit working within them, they too, would have been spiritually productive. Had I teamed up with a truly converted minister, results would have been much greater than when I worked alone. But when I teamed up with one of those men - NO RESULTS came!

IT IS THE SAME TODAY! Some ex-ministers of God's Church have gone out to draw a following after them. Some of them have drawn a FEW - yet so far as I can verify, they have drawn ONLY the embittered, resentful, unconverted members whom our local churches have been much relieved to be rid of! THAT IS THE WAY CHRIST ACTS!

Actually the business meeting had been postponed, and Mr. Daily had run off from our meetings for nought. But a little later the conference did lay him and me off and keep on Robert Taylor - later to their sorrow!

## **My mistake**

It was near the end of November, 1931. I was left without an income. But I didn't worry. I had learned to LIVE BY FAITH. I prayed for GOD to solve the financial problem - and I had faith He would.

Almost immediately a former business colleague, who had been advertising manager of the Vancouver daily newspaper when I had conducted a six-month merchandising survey for that paper, came to see me. He had started a new daily newspaper in Astoria, Ore. - without capital and in the midst of the rapidly descending depression. Would I come out and bail him out of his difficulties? He knew of no one else who had the peculiar know-how and experience to save his new paper from going under.

I mistakenly supposed this was God's answer to my prayer. I should have known better. I should have known God's Word says a minister must keep at it, in season and out of season, and Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." But I was still a "babe in Christ," and did not think of these scriptures. I looked on it as a very TEMPORARY job to help an old friend.

"I will come out and help you for one month," I agreed, "just the month of December."

But once out there I was stuck. The circumstances were entirely different than I had supposed, and I was stuck there until February, 1933.

Meanwhile for the first seven months of my Astoria stint my wife and children remained in our rented house on East State Street, Salem.

Early July, 1932, my wife called me. Garner Ted, then almost 2½, was stricken with pneumonia. I rushed in a newspaper car back to Salem, arriving late at night.

My wife was still awake. Garner Ted was lying on a sofa in the living room. Immediately I knelt by his side, my wife with me, and I anointed him, asking God to heal him. Suddenly it came to my mind I ought also to ask God to heal his speech. He had been born dumb. He could not speak a word - and now 2 years and 5 months old. He could only make motions, and grunt, saying, "Ugh! Ugh!" I asked God to restore his speech.

Afterward my wife told me that while I was praying for God to heal him of the pneumonia, she had silently asked God to put it into my mind to ask for his speech to be healed also. Ted was instantly healed of the pneumonia. The very next morning he was able to say a number of single words. In about three days he was talking in whole sentences.

Also while at Astoria, a member down in the Willamette Valley, Milas Helms, who by then was president of the Oregon Conference, drove to Astoria, arriving after 10 p.m. He had come unannounced in his pickup truck. It was December, 1932, or January, 1933. He had driven from his farm near Jefferson, Ore., thinking I might be too busy to come, but if he arrived with his pickup truck, he felt I would drop everything and go.

His little son, James, was stricken with pneumonia - not expected to live. The highways were icy and covered with snow. We arrived back at his farm about 5 a.m. Immediately I anointed and prayed for the boy. He was healed instantly, and later that morning was up out of bed, dressed and playing.

Again in late February, 1933, Milas Helms drove out unannounced to Astoria. The Oregon Conference had a little money - a very little.

By now - as a matter of fact - since December, 1931 - I had realized the mistake I made in going to Astoria. My wife and I had been praying earnestly to be returned to Christ's ministry. Our prayers at last were answered - but not until God knew I had learned the lesson of STAYING WITH IT, once in His ministry.

Mr. Helms explained a man named A.J. Ray, a former president of the California Conference of the Church of God, had come. He was anxious to bring to Oregon from Southern California a friend, a Sven (Sam) Oberg, supposed to be a "great" preacher. But the Oregon brethren had been "stung" by one supposed great preacher from Southern California, Mr. Taylor. I had learned that Mr. Taylor had failed utterly to raise up a single member for the church at Eugene, had traded the property off for an island in the river near Eugene, and had established a colony there of "Pentecostal" people, each of whom had donated all their properties and cash over to Taylor. The colony had gone on the rocks, the people had left and some had sued Mr. Taylor. They won their case. That was the end of the "great" Taylor.

Mr. Helms said the brethren did not want to get deceived by another "wonder preacher" from California, and they all wanted to get me back in harness before he arrived. They could only pay \$3 per week, but farmer members would supply us with eggs and produce, and they would also supply us with 100-pound sacks of whole wheat flour, with sugar and such things. The house rent they had selected for us was, I believe, \$7 per month, which they paid.

Mr. Oberg was a man of 53. He arrived only a day or so after I had. If R.L. Taylor had "swept them off their feet," Oberg did MORE! He was SO GREAT as a speaker and a man, on first appearance and first sermon, I actually thought of Hebrews 13:2 - that we might be entertaining an angel unawares. Oberg was TOO PERFECT to be human!

But the brethren had been taken in once, and they saw to it that I was hired before he and Mr. Ray could contest it - and there was no more money for Mr. Oberg. He and wife, age 25, and little girl about 3 or 4, all stayed at the Runcorns.

Immediately I wanted to start a major city-wide campaign with Oberg as speaker. I would handle the advertising and emcee. But Oberg and Ray wanted to hold a SMALL campaign in the Hollywood resident area of Salem, in an empty store building. There were many empty store buildings then. Probably more than half of small businesses in the United States had failed during the Depression. And 1933 was the year President Roosevelt closed the nation's banks!

My disillusionment of the super GREAT, GREAT Mr. Oberg began. I was in a humbling process. I was small in my own eyes. Mr. Oberg loomed as a spiritual GIANT. But I did have vision. And I did learn that Oberg did not think BIG!

For these Salem meetings I had handbills printed and distributed, and a half-page ad in the newspaper.

On opening night I was greatly alarmed - and so was Mr. Ray, Mr. McGill, Mr. Helms and others. The "Pentecostal" people were coming IN FORCE!

I had said before, I had observed that these people were glib and loud in their "Amens" and "Hallelujahs" and bragging testimony testifying of their own spiritual perfection since RECEIVING (GETTING) their "baptism," misquoting scripture, always using it out of context, and UNWILLING TO OBEY GOD!

We called a hurried huddle.

"Just leave everything to me," assured the GREAT Oberg. "I know exactly how to handle these people." He got away with it.

By the third night the "Pentecostals" had taken over. I preached sermons of spiritual truth and UNDERSTANDING and RIGHTEOUSNESS - but they had no taste for that. Oberg had hundreds of stories stored in his mind - tear-jerking stories, laugh stories, every kind. But NO BIBLE TRUTH. Just a DELIVERY and PERSONALITY!

After a few nights I dropped out of the every other night turns for my preaching. I preached to our own brethren on the Sabbaths, but he preached every weekday night.

The wild and weird antics of these "Pentecostal" people increased. But was this GOD'S Spirit doing such crazy things in them? This is a good place to quote a scripture in this connection the reader needs to understand: "IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet..." (Deut. 13:1-3).

To resist or disobey God's commandments is to "go after other gods."

God's Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a SOUND MIND. The weird antics, spiritual bragging and ways of these people were definitely NOT of a sound mind!

Satan's counterfeits are, indeed, DECEPTIVE, and by them Satan lures multiple thousands and even millions.

Absolutely NO "FRUIT" was borne by those meetings. Those meetings lasted some four months, Mr. O.J. Runcorn paying the \$10 monthly storeroom rent. Nothing was accomplished but a nightly emotional jamboree.

All through this "campaign" the conspiracy of Messrs. Oberg and Ray against me deepened. They wanted my \$3 per week and were willing to use any dirty politics to "GET" it.

My father had died in April, 1933. My wife had gone in late April or early May to be with my mother on the farm, near Molalla, Ore. One night my wife was awakened from an intensive dream. God's angel was giving her a message: "GO TO SALEM AT ONCE! GO TO SALEM AT ONCE! Enemies are plotting against your husband."

She was too alarmed to let the dream go unheeded. She came immediately to Salem. About the same time, Milas Helms drove in a hurried emergency trip from his farm south of Salem to warn me that Messrs. Ray and Oberg were privately going around to brethren with an accusation against me. We had four children, the two boys then 3 and 4. Oberg was an addict on neatness and precision. Naturally part of the time, toys and playthings were scattered around our house. Otherwise my wife was a neat housekeeper. These two men were saying I was disqualified for the ministry because I was "not ruling well my own household, and my wife was not neat and tidy enough."

Milas was then president of the conference.

"There is only one thing I can do to help you," he said, "beside warning you. I will be chairman of the business meeting they have set up. I can let you speak first, if that will help."

The propaganda of these men was false. I did rule well my own household, and my wife was a good housekeeper. Normally I should have wanted the last word - to speak last. This time, God led me to choose to speak first.

The business meeting was held in the little church in Harrisburg, Ore. Messrs. Oberg and Ray had stern faces.

I prayed. God showed me what to say. Mr. Helms opened the business meeting with prayer, then immediately gave me the floor, and I sprang to the pulpit before either of the conspirators realized it. They were taken completely by surprise. I said I was going to speak openly and in complete frankness. I understood Oberg and Ray had pressured the calling of the meeting as an INQUISITION, to accuse me FALSELY - that my eyes had just been opened to a conspiracy going on against me. I understood their charges were to be against my wife. I acknowledged that I myself was not perfect any more than my inquisitors. If they had accusations against ME, let them make them, and I would only ask the brethren to PRAY for me. But in all boldness I said that if one of

these men dared say a word against my wife, I would forget I was a minister, and CLOSE THEIR MOUTHS WITH MY FISTS!

My speech was short and to the point! As I had confessed some of my own faults, asking all of them to pray for me, every eye but those of the conspirators was filled with tears.

I sat down. Oberg and Ray were then called. There was nothing left for them to say. I had confessed personal faults and imperfections, and the brethren would have backed me in shutting their mouths from accusing my wife.

God pulled me through that inquisition.

The Oregon Conference brethren all loved me. Only the jealous ministers hated me. The brethren still looked to ME for LEADERSHIP, in spite of Mr. Oberg's "perfection."

As the Salem "meetings" came to an end, Mr. Elmer E Fisher, the farmer living seven miles west of Eugene, asked me to come there for a campaign. He was chairman of the school board of Firbutte School, 8 miles west of Eugene - a one-room country school seating 36. At the same time the conference had rented the church at Harrisburg, seating 150, for a "campaign."

I preferred the smaller school-house, leaving the 150 seats for Sam Oberg at Harrisburg.

Now came the BEGINNING of what has grown into the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD. But I was not yet through with the Ray-Oberg persecution.

*(To be continued)*

**Good News - September 1980**

# **The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God**

*by Herbert W. Armstrong  
page 2 Good News August 1980*

## **Chapter Four**

UP TO THIS point I have covered events preparatory to the actual beginning of this "Philadelphia era" of God's Church, The WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD.

The time was August, 1933. Elmer E. Fisher of Eugene, Ore., was brought into the Church through a Bible study I had with him and his wife one stormy evening

during the tent campaign held in Eugene. He was chairman of the school board of the Firbutte school, a one-room 36-seat school eight miles west of Eugene.

Sven "Sam" A. Oberg and A.J. Ray started a campaign at the same time in the 150-seat church in Harrisburg, Ore.

All connected with the start of the present Church era began from smallest beginnings, in the midst of the worst economic depression of our time. During this campaign I stayed at the Fisher home, my family remaining in Salem, Ore.

I found a rock atop a hill close by the Fisher farm, which made a prayer rock before which I knelt in prayer every day of the meetings. Average attendance for the six weeks was about 40.

I first typed out on a borrowed typewriter an outline of subjects to be covered in the meetings, with many carbon copies. These I carried in person afoot over the sparsely settled area. The roads were graveled. I walked over these rough graveled roads with shoes that had "holy soles." Part of the time Elmer Fisher let me take his Chevy car.

We had in attendance the Fishers, the elder Mr. and Mrs. Alva Ellis, their son Claude and wife, who had been members of Sardis in Southern California.

About a week before the conclusion of the meetings, I found Ernest Fisher, brother of Elmer, ready for baptism, and I baptized him.

Meanwhile Sam Oberg was having a smaller attendance in his 150-seat Harrisburg church than I in my 36-seat schoolhouse. This intensified jealousy. Mr. Oberg was producing no "fruit" whatsoever. Messrs. Oberg and Ray induced Mike Helms to call a "business meeting" at the Harrisburg church on the Sunday prior to the last week of the campaigns. It was an "inquisition." Through the morning and part of the afternoon, each of them orated about an hour and a half against me, accusing me of improperly baptizing Ernest Fisher. I spoke 15 minutes in my defense, reading from Matthew 28:19-20 that he who taught was to baptize those taught, after which by laying on of hands they would receive the Holy Spirit, *then* teaching them the way of the Christian life.

At that point, as I finished, Elmer Fisher drove up to take me back to the Firbutte school for the Sunday night service.

I asked Messrs. Oberg and Ray if they would take no action until I could be present at another meeting. They promised.

Half or more of the brethren went with me outside to see me off. While they were out, Oberg and Ray pulled a double cross, breaking their promise before all, and steamrollered through the few left inside a resolution condemning me for baptizing according to Jesus' specific command.

On hearing this I immediately wrote to Mike Helms, then president, rejecting any further receiving of the \$3 per week "salary," saying that henceforth I would rely on God for support, not the brethren.

Anyway, the meetings closed at the end of that week, and afterward I organized the 19 we had, including the Fishers and Ellises, into the parent church of the present Worldwide Church of God.

This was the "Philadelphia" succession of the CHURCH OF GOD founded the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, by Jesus Christ. It was founded entirely through living FAITH in Jesus Christ. It was founded in poverty in the midst of the worst economic depression within the memory of man. And it was founded amid political persecution from the ministers Sven Oberg and A.J. Ray. It was founded after I had severed my connection with the Oregon Conference. And I had never been a member of the "Sardis" succession of God's Church, nor of the Dugger offshoot started 1932 in Salem, W.Va.

However, my friendship and brotherhood with the Oregon Conference brethren continued. Often many of them began driving down to Eugene to attend services with the fledgling new "Philadelphia" succession of God's Church. Always the brethren of all "Sardis" people had been more than friendly to me - they really did love me and my wife. It was their jealous ministers, who were fruitless in the work, who persecuted me.

The new Church resulting from the Firbutte school meetings began meeting three times a week, including Sabbath afternoons, at the Jeans schoolhouse, some four miles on west of the Firbutte school.

Meetings were held by the new church Sabbath, Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Soon I began holding meetings in the old Masonic Temple building in downtown Eugene. These meetings were held on Sunday, Monday and Thursday nights, beside the three meetings weekly held by the new church at Jeans school.

There was a new Masonic Temple in Eugene. The old Masonic Temple auditorium was on the second floor, with store rooms (retail) below.

Also, for \$10-a-month rent, I was given a small room on the second floor adjoining the hall as an office. That was the first office of the newly raised up Church of God.

These three-times-a-week meetings in Eugene continued into the winter, but I learned that meetings three times a week will not draw an audience like meetings six nights a week. Nevertheless, we had a good attendance of some 50 or 60 per service.

### **Oregon Conference brethren go with Dugger**

Soon the brethren who had operated as the Oregon Conference decided to join up with the Andrew N. Dugger offshoot headquartered at Salem, W.Va.

The Dugger church was claiming to have a "Bible organization." They claimed 12 apostles, which included most of their ministers, 70 leading elders, of which they had only a few, and a financial board of seven.

This was a clever deception, used by Mr. Dugger to deceive the membership into thinking that he, only, had "the Bible form of organization." He claimed the 12 original apostles were instituted as a permanent board to head the Church. They were not. They were 12 who had accompanied Jesus wherever He went during His 3½-year earthly ministry, and the 40 days after His resurrection, to be personal WITNESSES of the divinity and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Actually, the opposition the Church met during its first five or 10 years was Jewish opposition, which rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah. The early preaching of the apostles was primarily eye-witness testimony of the miraculous ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. There is no indication whatever in the Bible that Jesus intended them to be a permanent board of 12 apostles - and in historic fact, they simply were not.

At one time in His ministry Jesus had appointed 70 followers to go on a special mission as advance men preparing the way in cities where Jesus was personally to visit soon after.

The seven were deacons appointed by Peter and the other apostles after the day of Pentecost, to minister to women and children and wait on tables to the group remaining in Jerusalem who had come from many other areas. The King James Version calls this waiting on tables "this business," and Mr. Dugger twisted that to mean they handled the MONEY and the business transactions of the Church.

Mr. Dugger at the time was under fire from the Stanberry church, accused of making himself the head man. So he carefully kept himself off of the "Board of the Twelve Apostles," who were ostensibly to rule the church. But he put himself in as chairman of the Board of Seven, to handle the money and the "business" affairs of the church.

One incident well illustrated how this worked in actual practice. A member of the "Twelve" (supposedly RULING the church) had made a statement against Mr. Dugger. Mr. Dugger immediately gave an order for the member of the "Twelve" to publicly disclaim and apologize or he would cut off his salary immediately. That proved who was the real "boss."

Mr. Dugger's claiming to have a "Bible form of organization," and accusing Stanberry of having a non-biblical form, puzzled the whole church as to what, after all, was the real intended biblical form of church organization. I have to admit I became mixed up on this also. It is plain enough in the New Testament, but for the time we were all confused and blinded to it.

Actually, the Bible says the Church is built on the FOUNDATION of the APOSTLES and prophets (Old Testament), Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. It says plainly that Christ gave different ones special spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12) for various administrations and operation in the Church's Work, and that He set in the Church administration, first apostles (not a continuation of the original 12 as a

"ruling board"), then prophets (of which there are none today), then evangelists, pastors and elders. Various other New Testament passages show that some elders were local elders, some preaching elders, others not preaching, but in a degree of leadership. Then for physical duties there were deacons and deaconesses. THAT IS HOW GOD'S CHURCH IS ORGANIZED TODAY. That is the TRUE Bible form of Church organization!

### **I cooperate, but do not join**

When the Oregon Conference disbanded and joined in with the Dugger offshoot, I did give serious consideration to it. I was never really convinced of Mr. Dugger's professed "Bible form of organization," and I decided never to join them. We now had our own new local church in Eugene, though I did not yet at that time realize it was to develop into the Philadelphia succession or generation of the true Church of God.

I counseled with Elmer Fisher. We decided to wait and see how things developed.

Messrs. Oberg and Ray had joined the Salem, W.Va., offshoot. They, especially Mr. Ray, were making a whole religion out of the "clean and unclean" meats of Leviticus 11. I had been listed by Mr. Dugger as one of the "Seventy Leading Elders," but had never accepted nor joined them.

Finally one of "The Twelve" came to my rather bare office room in the old Masonic Temple quarters. He had one question, What was my stand on the "clean and unclean"?

I stated my stand concisely and briefly. God had never intended the "unclean" animals to be food for humans. But it is a PHYSICAL, not a SPIRITUAL, matter. The Gospel is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not in meat or drink, but in spiritual matters (Rom. 14:17). Therefore I DO NOT preach abstinence from unclean meats in proclaiming the GOSPEL, but I DO teach all Church members for health reasons.

He had never heard it put that way, but said he felt I believed as they do, only had a different way of saying it, and I was acceptable.

I finally decided we would fellowship with them. I would work WITH them, but not FOR them and at my own expense, but would NOT JOIN them as a member. I did work with them for some three years.

But I am now ahead of my story.

I believe it was the spring of 1934 that I had finished the three-nights-a-week meetings in downtown Eugene, and engaged in a six-nights-a-week six-week campaign at the Alvadore schoolhouse, 15 miles north-west of Eugene. This was a two-room country school, with a second story hall covering the area of the two ground-floor schoolrooms.

We had a good attendance, and I had, or rather God gave me, 15 new baptized members.

Meanwhile I had been holding Sabbath services Sabbath mornings in my home in Eugene, attended by converts from the Eugene meetings, and Sabbath afternoon meetings at the Jeans school, 12 miles west of Eugene.

With the 15 new members from Alvadore it became imperative that we buy back the church building (seating 100) that we had built in Eugene in 1931. You will remember that had been deeded in the name of elder Robert Taylor. Mr. Taylor had gotten rid of it. It was, in 1934, owned by a man who lived next door. There were no seats, no pulpit. It was unfinished, outside and inside. We now had enough members to buy it. With our own labor - more of mine than any others - we finished the outside siding, the inside plasterboard, seats, which I designed and largely built. We had a cabinet-making carpenter member from Alvadore who built a platform, pulpit and altar railing. But again I am ahead of the story.

Back now, to October, in 1933. It was in that month that we formally organized the church at Jeans, as "The Church of God at Eugene, Oregon." Also in that month, I heard that the local radio station, KORE, with the smallest wattage of power allowed, 100 watts, had a weekday morning devotional service of 15 minutes open free to ministers in Eugene. I found most ministers did not want to get going at 7:45 mornings for the broadcast, and the time was seldom used.

I went to the station, and was given free time for the very next week. This was about Feast of Tabernacles time, but only myself and wife had been keeping the annual Sabbaths. However, the new members, beginning with those brought in from the Firbutte meetings, had begun keeping these annual Sabbaths with us. It had not yet been revealed to me to know the real MEANING of God's seven annual festivals. Up until 1945 we observed the annual Holy Days. I did not know WHY - and therefore I could not teach the new converts who formed the beginning of the "Philadelphia" succession of God's Church, which had existed since A.D. 31. I knew only that the annual Holy Days (High Sabbaths) were commanded by God and was willing to OBEY first and understand WHY later, whenever God would reveal the meaning. And how wonderful and vitally important is that meaning.

But now I was to go on the air for the first time in my life. The ministers of the churches in Eugene had not considered the opportunity to put a Gospel message on the air of sufficient importance to rise early enough to be at the radio studio at 7:45 weekday mornings. But to me, it was the most important OPPORTUNITY to proclaim God's TRUTH that had so far come to me.

During the days remaining before that first Monday morning on the air, I worked diligently and with inspired enthusiasm on the messages for the five weekday mornings.

Came the crucial Monday morning. I was well prepared. One minute before that zero hour I was nervous. I had never spoken through a microphone before.

"If I need any instruction, you'd better give it to me quickly," I said to the announcer. "I've never been on the air before."

"Just stand before that mike and begin talking when I give you the signal," he said indifferently. That reassured me. I said to myself, Why, I'm not a bit nervous now.

The announcer announced me and gave the signal. Suddenly nerves gripped my whole body and mind! But somehow I began talking, and after 30 seconds or a minute the "mike-fright" was gone. My mind was absorbed with the subject. The GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God was ON THE AIR for the first time!

I began with God's promises to Abraham. The whole true Gospel is based on those PROMISES to Abraham. Soon I was revealing to listeners that the promises were NOT heaven, but this EARTH as an everlasting possession, coupling other scriptures with God's promises beginning in Genesis 12.

Through the week I carried on the theme of the WORLD TOMORROW - the KINGDOM OF GOD! That message had not gone out to the world publicly since about A.D. 53! But my heart was in it, and it began coming in POWER!

Almost 1,900 years had gone by - since A.D. 53, since that message had been proclaimed PUBLICLY! I did not realize, then, the significance of that moment!

On Thursday morning of that week, the announcer told me the station owner and manager wanted to see me.

"Mr. Armstrong," he said, "never before have we received mail from listeners to this morning devotional period. But many letters are coming in to the station. Listeners are writing that they never heard what you are preaching before. So I listened in on you this morning. You have a good radio voice. You are evoking a good public response. I suggest you work out a half-hour program, and we'll put it on as a public service every Sunday morning."

The next morning, Friday, Frank Hill wanted to see me again.

"Mr. Armstrong, you've stirred up havoc among the ministers in Eugene. They held a meeting of their Ministerial Association yesterday and informed me they don't want you on the air any more - and they will see to it that one of them is here for the morning devotional every week-day hereafter. It appears that members of their congregations are coming to them and bringing their Bibles, and pointing out what you've been preaching and embarrassing the ministers by asking why they are preaching the very opposite of what the Bible says.

"I can't give you any more free time," continued Mr. Hill, "but I'll tell you what I *can* do. I'll sell you a half hour Sunday mornings for less than half of what it costs the station to operate the time. I'll open up a Sunday morning half hour for you at \$2.50 per half hour."

So *that* is how Christ's true Gospel message came to go out regularly OVER THE AIR - and it has never ceased since it began the following Jan. 7, 1934! Actually station-owner Frank Hill prompted the start of *The World Tomorrow* program, by contributing more than half the actual cost of the radio time! Frank Hill is long since dead, but I'm glad to say this to his everlasting credit.

I worked diligently from that day in October, to start what we then called the "Radio Church of God," the first Sunday in 1934! It was a significant date in the history of the Church of the living God!

*(To be continued)*

Good News - September 1980

# **The History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God**

*by Herbert W. Armstrong*  
*page 2 Good News September 1980*

## **Chapter 5**

WE HAVE NOW covered the beginning, in August of 1933, of the present succession of THE CHURCH OF GOD, founded A.D. 31 by Jesus Christ.

It was begun amid persecution, in the midst of the worst economic depression of our time, and with only 19 members, mostly new converts.

In October, 1933, about Feast of Tabernacles time, opportunity had come to me to go on the air on Eugene's [Oregon] minimum-wattage Radio KORE, weekday mornings at 7:30 for 15-minute programs, free of cost.

That had led to launching the Radio Church of God program, 30 minutes on Sunday mornings, beginning the first Sunday in 1934 - Jan.7.

In the first months after my conversion, spring of 1927, I had conceived the determination to publish a new magazine. I had been in magazine and newspaper advertising since age 18. But the new magazine would be different. It would not be secular. It would carry no commercial advertising. It could not be sold - there would be no subscription price. But it would make the TRUTH PLAIN - a magazine of UNDERSTANDING. God's Word, the Holy Bible, is TRUTH. There would be no magazine like it on earth.

I had planned a "Three-Point Campaign" - spearheaded by the radio broadcast, followed by *The Plain Truth* and reinforced by personal evangelism holding six-nights-a-week meetings.

I quote here from the beginning of Chapter 31 of my *Autobiography*:

"Surely nothing could have started smaller. Born in adversity in the very depths of the Depression, this Work of God was destined to grow to worldwide power.

"But I did not foresee its destiny then. There were no illusions of grandeur. It was not through any planning of mine that the little three-point campaign then being launched was to expand into its present global scope and influence.

"Most people are conscious only of what they see - of the material. They fail to see the invisible hand of God in the working out of things.

"All I had in mind, as *The World Tomorrow* program was being planned late in 1933, was to serve God faithfully wherever He should lead in Lane County, Oregon.

"It is true that 'where there is no vision the people perish.' But few people realize that the source of true vision is God. *There has been vision* behind the planning and phenomenal growth of this great Work. But this is the Work of God, not of man, and the vision and planning has been that of Jesus Christ, the active living HEAD of this Work, not of man."

From the beginning of January, 1934, I began planning to issue the magazine conceived in my mind seven years before - in 1927. God caused me to wait seven years before starting it. And even then it started smaller, surely, than any magazine ever did! There was no money. I had wondered, back in 1927, How would I gain subscribers? For, even though I envisioned a no-subscription-price magazine, still, being experienced in magazine publishing, I knew its circulation must come from subscribers who *requested it*, even for free!

But now that problem was solved. I would announce it over the air. I would try to *sell* the listening audience on it - cause them to *want* to subscribe - even at no subscription price!

Necessity may be the mother of invention. So without money, I borrowed a typewriter. I had barely enough money to buy mimeograph stencils and some inexpensive paper for printing. The local mimeograph dealer offered to allow me to use without cost one of his mimeograph machines. I cut the headlines myself with a mimeograph stylus.

*The Plain Truth* "magazine" made its most humble bow on Feb. 1, 1934. By that time I had obtained a subscription list of around 350, including our own and the Oregon "Sardis" members. Volume I, Number 1, of *The Plain Truth* was a pretty amateurish, homemade sort of thing. Probably no one but myself would had dignified it with the name "magazine." But it was a START! And its contents were not amateurish but professional - publishing God's TRUTH!

After the Alvadore, Ore., meetings and launching of the future *World Tomorrow* program and *The Plain Truth*, I soon began holding evangelistic meetings in other Oregon towns.

After the mimeographing of the first *Plain Truth*, apparently the Eugene A.B. Dick Co. dealer did not want to continue loaning me the monthly use of a modern mimeograph. He came up with an antiquated secondhand ancestor of the mimeograph - an old Neostyle, which I managed to buy for \$10. I also managed to buy a secondhand typewriter for \$10. The ancient Neostyle was entirely hand operated. It served us some few years.

After the two or three months' meetings in the old Masonic building - upstairs, with its one-room office - I was offered an office in the old Hampton building, across from the post office in Eugene. My new office rent was \$5 per month.

It was a second-floor small office, with no windows, no ventilation except a transom into an adjoining large room used for labor union meetings. Whenever a union meeting was held, we found next morning stale cigar smoke had filtered into my office through the transom. We could only work a couple hours or so, and had to leave until stale air seeped out.

In this room were a couple of scarred old tables and a couple of old chairs. I had no desk but these old tables. I moved the antiquated Neostyle and secondhand typewriter in, and this became our office for the next two or three years.

I wrote the articles for *The Plain Truth* and cut the mimeograph stencils. My wife was the "pressman." She hand-cranked the Neostyle, feeding each sheet of paper one at a time through it by hand. I was therefore editor and "typesetter." She was my "data processing center," maintaining the mailing list on paper with pen and ink. For filing cabinets I used cardboard cartons obtained gratis at a grocery store, indexing filing folders in these cartons. They had to suffice instead of modern steel filing cabinets.

Yet it seemed to Mrs. Armstrong and me that we were now "getting up in the world." From no office I had advanced to a no-rent office, and now I had a \$5-per-month office! A single dollar was a considerable item to us then.

Few indeed today know the sacrifice, the poverty to which I had been reduced, the hardship, the opposition, the persecution God led me to endure that HIS GOSPEL MESSAGE might be thundered in all the world. Yes, and for the first time since about A.D. 53 - for a duration of 1,900 years! - that God's Message - that of the world's ONLY HOPE - could now go to kings and heads of nations over all continents! - that God's own Church could be revitalized - again raised up in our time - and its brethren be awakened to God's TRUTH.

I close this chapter with a quotation from the *Autobiography*, written prior to or soon after the year 1960 - with a few additions I wish now - writing in July, 1980 - to insert. With these new additions inserted, I quote:

"I think it well that the reader be given some idea of the financial hardship under which God's present worldwide Work got under way." Some persecutors imply that I was "in it for the money."

"And further because an advanced student here on the Ambassador College campus expressed great surprise the other day to learn that I had been forced

into abject poverty and to labor along for 28 long and lean years in economic hardship. He had heard that I had been 'knocked down' economically by God, somewhat as the apostle Paul was by blindness, and plunged into God's service. But he assumed that the financial 'punishment' had consisted of some three or four comparatively short periods of perhaps a few weeks or months.

"So let me say right here something about conversion I find most people do not understand.

"The REPENTANCE required by God's *conditions* to being truly converted by receiving God's Holy Spirit is something far different than most people suppose! It is infinitely more than merely 'seeing' God's truth, or some of it, and being good enough to accept and embrace it. It is something altogether different from merely agreeing with certain doctrines!"

I add now, in 1980, the question, HOW MANY of you who profess to be spiritually converted and have come into God's Church have had *that kind* of conversion? You saw the TRUTH. You accepted it - perhaps with some elation and joy. Could you be like those in Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed, who "when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness" (Mark 4:16), but are not truly converted (CHANGED) - and do not endure and "bring forth fruit" (verse 20)? Conversion is MUCH MORE THAN THAT! Continue from the *Autobiography*:

"Whoever you are, YOU HAVE, or you *have had*, an IDOL. You have had another 'god' before the true living almighty God. It might be your hobby or your pleasure, favorite sport, TV program or pastime - whatever has filled your interest and your time. It might even be your wife, your husband or children. It could be your job (if it was *first* in your thoughts and affections and interests). It might be your own vanity, your lipstick and personal appearance (if it became vanity). It could be your business or profession (if it were your main goal in life). Very often it is the opinion of your family, your group, club or social or business associates - and what *they* think of you.

"But whatever it is, that idol must be crushed, SMASHED, literally torn out of your mind, even though it hurts more than having all your teeth pulled out and perhaps a jawbone too! I believe few if any experience this process painlessly. I know of no anesthetic that will render it pleasurable. How about *your* conversion - if that's what it really was?

"Now I had an idol. My whole mind and heart was set on that idol. I had worked hard, night and day, for that false god. My life objective was the intense desire - the desperate, overpowering, driving ambition - to become 'successful' in the eyes of important business men - to be considered by them as outstandingly 'IMPORTANT' - to achieve status in the world. I did not have a love for money *as such*. But I coveted the status that would gratify vanity! "After establishing my publishers' representative business in Chicago, Ill., I aspired some day to own one of the finest and largest homes in the north-shore aristocratic suburb of Winnetka. I wanted to be regarded as 'important' by the important."

## **Crashing down to reality**

"I was so zealously set on accomplishment that it became the god I served.

"God could not use me as long as I had another 'god' more important in my eyes than He. Of course I didn't know yet, then, that God intended to use me. But when He did, tearing that false ambition out of me was like yanking out, root and branch, my very life itself - for *it had been my life!* It was smashing dead everything I had lived and worked for!

"So God started the process by first taking away my business by bankrupting my every major client." That included such giant corporations as Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., the J.T. Case farm implement company, John Deere & Co., Dalton Adding Machine Co. and others - all in the flash depression of 1920 went into receivership. "Twice, later, He swept businesses that promised multimillion-dollar rewards right out from under my feet. He brought me down to poverty and hunger!"

I felt I had become like King Midas in reverse - everything I touched turned to nothing!

By hard work, driving myself, resourcefulness, persuasion and determination I had built, by age 28, an income equal to, in the 1980-dollar value, \$175,000 a year!

"But the bigger they come, as the saying is, the harder they fall! And all that ego came crashing down, *down, DOWN!* I had been so big, in my own sight, I could not see God in the picture! But God had whittled self-righteous Job down to size. God drove strutting King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon out to eat grass with wild beasts. God struck down arrogant, persecuting Saul with blindness so He could open his eyes, convert him, change his name to the apostle Paul. And He was adequately able to knock me down off my imaginary perch - again and *again* - until I surrendered completely to Him! I came to realize that all that 'self-importance' was pure illusion. I was brought down to reality with a THUD!

"Then instead of vanity, ego, misguided self-importance God fed me, *for 28 long years*, on the raw and scanty diet of humiliation, poverty and hunger!" Yet on surrender and conversion, He began feeding me also on FAITH replacing self-confidence, TRUTH replacing worldly acquisition, the way of His law - LOVE, GIVING, SHARING - replacing carnal GETTING!

"Had God allowed me to suffer financial reverses, even to the point of experiencing real hunger, for a day or a year, I might have regained the same sense of materialistic ambition, once back on my financial feet.

"But God had in mind, as events since have proved, using me as His instrument in preparing the way for the KINGDOM OF GOD - for WORLD PEACE - for universal happiness, joy and salvation. And to that end, for a growing worldwide Work involving tremendous expenditures in His service. He knew that He could never entrust me to handle millions of dollars of His money, so long as my heart remained set on personal STATUS, self-importance and things money could buy to exalt self-vanity.

"But please do not misunderstand. It is not wrong in God's sight to have or enjoy the good material things in life. God's greatest men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, were prosperous and wealthy men. God Himself prospered them because their ways were right before Him. Although God allowed Satan to take away Job's wealth it was not because his wealth was a sin - but to humble Job from his sin of self-righteousness. Once Job's vanity was deflated, God restored his material wealth DOUBLE! What is wrong, and therefore sinful, is setting our hearts on these material things instead of God's TRUE VALUES! The *love* of material things - the VANITY of exalting the *self* above God - of wanting the praise of PEOPLE by coveting STATUS in their eyes - these are the evil things God wants rooted out. When the heart is set on such things, the CHARACTER shrinks inwardly and dries up. THANK GOD He saved me from such a fate by 28 years of poverty and humility!"

### **Dying to live!**

"I was not converted *until* I was brought to the place where I realized my own NOTHINGNESS and God's GREATNESS - until Satan's injected VANITY was driven out and the ego was completely whipped, defeated, *conquered!* When I came to consider myself as a worthless 'hunk of human junk' not even worth throwing on the junk pile - the self-exalting ego *conquered* - completely REPENTANT for the way I had traveled - now ready to *TURN FROM* that former life - I told God I was now ready to *GIVE* myself and my life to HIM! I didn't then see how He could use it, but if He could He could have it. Jesus Christ had bought and paid for it with His life's blood!

"But let me say to the reader, IF God could take that completely defeated, worthless life, and use it to develop and build what *HE HAS DONE*, He can take your life, too, and use it - and in due time convert it into a very immortal SPIRIT-COMPOSED, GOD-BEING as one of His children in the glorious KINGDOM OF God! There is NO END to what He may do with *YOUR* life, ultimately! UNDERSTAND, what has happened since gives me no glory! But it magnifies the power and glory of God to take such a worthless but submissive tool and accomplish what HE purposes through it!"

But don't ever suppose it comes easy! You will receive a portion - probably a very small portion at first - of God's Holy Spirit upon a REAL REPENTANCE, FAITH and baptism. Repentance is far more than REMORSE! I know a man who could shed almost "buckets of tears" in remorse - but always tomorrow was another day and he had not really *changed* at all! As I said, had God kept me in poverty only a day or a year, I might have reverted right back to the same old ways. REPENT means to *TURN FROM!* It means the DEATH of the old self. It means a CHANGED and a NEW LIFE in CHRIST! It is often a very PAINFUL process - it was for me!

But consider this! You were not born with "human nature" as we know it. Neither were you born with God's divine nature!

What we call human nature is subtly and gradually injected by SATAN the great DECEIVER! He is the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). As radio sounds and television pictures come into your home *through the air*, so Satan's nature comes into every human as soon as the baby mind begins to function! SATAN

BROADCASTS! Not in sounds, words or pictures - but in ATTITUDES, THOUGHTS, IMPULSES!

But Satan broadcasts into the infant mind only little by little - selfishness, coveting, vanity, then gradually jealousy and envy, resentment of authority over one, a spirit of COMPETITION, the desire to "GET," to take, to have, to accumulate. This evil nature grows little by little.

When one is converted - when God calls, opens one's eyes to His TRUTH, brings a real REPENTANCE from these ways of "GET" - that is, a *turning FROM* those human ways Satan pumped in - one cannot receive GOD'S HOLY, DIVINE NATURE in its complete FULLNESS all at once! Not any more than you received Satan's nature all at once!

One must GROW in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Old ways and habits must be rooted out. A newborn baby doesn't learn to walk all at once. One does not OVERCOME the former life, old habits, all at once. In his MIND - in the inner INTENTION - one makes the full decision to CHANGE all at once. He intends to, means to do so, but is unable to become spiritually perfect all at once.

I did deeply MEAN TO give my life over to CHRIST at conversion. But I did not succeed all at once in doing that job perfectly and completely - nor can you! So do not become discouraged. It is the OVERCOMERS who shall reign with Christ. *I am still overcoming!* So, I hope, are you!

## **Growth of the Church**

As each individual child of God must GROW - and gradually, not attain perfection at one bound all at once - so God's Church in our time has had to GROW!

I did carry on continual personal six-nights-a-week campaigns for some time. Radio broadcasting in due time leaped into Salem and Portland, Ore. - then Spokane, Wash., then Los Angeles, Calif., then COAST TO COAST! Little by little *The Plain Truth* grew. Little churches were formed from my personal campaigns, but because there was no minister to feed the flock, each soon died. Cooperation continued with the Salem, W.Va., offshoot, and also with the Stanberry Church of God bodies. Persecution from their ministers continued.

By 1946 I planned definitely, as Christ led, to raise up Ambassador College in Pasadena. Headquarters were moved there. The college started Oct. 8, 1947. Beginning 1951 and 1952 a few graduates became ministers. New churches sprang up. It was a story of GROWTH! As you and I, as individuals, must GROW in spite of adversity, so the Church and Work has GROWN. JESUS CHRIST DID IT ALL!