

Six More Ministers Now Ordained

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*Now, for the first time in 750 years,
God's complete government is restored in His Church.*

by **Herbert W. Armstrong**

JANUARY 22nd was a Sabbath that will go down in the eternal history of God's Church and His Kingdom! On that day, for the first time in 750 years, the government of God was fully restored in His Church. Every administrative office which Christ set in His Church is functioning once again.

On that day, at the headquarters Church in Pasadena, six additional God-called, consecrated, Ambassador-College-trained ministers were ordained with fasting and prayer, by the laying on of hands of the ministers previously ordained.

Not Since 1200 A.D.

Historical research reveals that the last remains of God's complete government in the true Church of God existed around 1200 A.D., among the "Waldenses" (as the Church of God was then called by the world), while the apostle Peter Waldo was still alive.

Some of the administrative offices which Christ set in His Church have continued to the present time. But since the days of Peter Waldo the entire form of God's government, as HE set it in His Church, has not been perpetuated.

You find the seven eras, or stages of activity, in the trice Church of God described by Jesus' prophecy in the second and third chapters of Revelation. Herman Hoeh's article in the July, 1953, issue of *The GOOD NEWS* traced the history of these seven churches-or seven successive stages of the one true Church of God-a Church that was always small in number, persecuted, despised by the world.

The "Sardis" Church

Yet even this true Church has been composed of humans. And by the time of the latter, dying days of the "Sardis" church-the 1860s on through the 1930s -government had degenerated to a form of worldly politics. The church was headed by a "General Conference," and leaders elected by vote of delegates. It was government of MEN-not of God.

It was during those days, in 1927, that God brought me to complete surrender and conversion. I was brought into contact with the Stanberry church, and into fellowship with the Oregon members. In December, 1930, at their urging, my first evangelistic campaign was held, under their auspices, in Harrisburg, Oregon. I was ordained by the Oregon Conference, and brought full time into the ministry, in the summer of 1931.

I realized they were God's Church. Yet I was extremely troubled and perplexed about two things. Their form of organization, obviously, was not GOD'S form. Secondly, it began to be clear that their leaders refused to correct doctrinal errors, which they admitted in writing were false teachings. And they also refused to publish or teach their members truths which they admitted, in writing, were truths, and "new light to them.

In a word, they refused to accept correction from the Word of God, and they refused to GROW in knowledge or in grace. As a body they were not overcomers. They preached what they had of the true Message with a 'weak whisper" heard by the few, not with the "loud shout," thundered around the world. As an instrument of God, carrying on GOD'S WORK, the Sardis church was now DEAD!

Those of us in Oregon who were obedient in keeping God's Word (Rev. 3:8-10), permitting the Bible to correct us, joyfully accepting new light, were separated from persecuting "Sardis" jurisdiction late in 1934. The separation came during the meetings that resulted in the raising up of the Eugene Church, but before it was established. Yet, while we threw off their human government over us, and began from there to follow the principles of GOD'S government, we still made every attempt to fellowship with them for some years. We were rewarded only with opposition, and every effort by their ministry to destroy the work God was then beginning thru those HE could govern and use.

"Philadelphia" Church-and The OPEN DOOR

Thus the "Philadelphia" era of the Church had its most humble beginning. It started like the "grain of mustard seed." Soon the Church of God at Eugene was raised up.

GOD OPENED A DOOR! A very small door, at first. The door of one small 100-watt radio station, KORE, in Eugene, the first Sunday in 1934. Then ANOTHER tiny door. February 1st, the door of the printing press. Or could we, as yet, even call it that? Volume I, Number I of The PLAIN TRUTH came out February 1st, 1934. But it wasn't printed-in the usual sense of that term. Not for two or three years yet! It was mimeographed, on a borrowed mimeograph, from stencils cut on a borrowed typewriter. There was no "scope," so the headlines were carefully hand lettered by holding the stencil up to a window-pane! About 250 copies were printed of that first issue.

The questions of church organization, and church government, seem clouded in most minds. Why? GOD is Supreme Ruler. GOD is Sovereign of the universe. WHY cannot men see that GOD should instruct us in the structure of church organization-that the church should be governed by GOD? In the beginning God decreed that man must CHOOSE right or wrong-life or death-God's rule or man's. God forced Adam to choose. Adam chose to reject God's government.

Ever since, the sons of Adam have rebelled against being governed by GOD -they have chosen to rule themselves, or be ruled by men-not by God! Today we have been born into a world filled with churches-all organized according to human ideas-all governed by MEN. We have been so close to these various forms of church organization and human church government that GOD'S form has seemed obscure. The question has been perplexing, even to those who honestly were seeking to find the truth.

Yet it is so clear and simple in the Bible.

How God Governs Church

In I Corinthians 12:28, God tells us in plain language:

"And GOD bath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Notice, it is GOD who sets these officers and powers in the Church. The people do not elect officers by vote. GOD rules His Church. The people do not rule it. Here three offices are mentioned, apostles, prophets, teachers, then come powers which GOD supplies in the Church. God is a miracle-working God. His Church is His instrument for manifesting His POWER, carrying out His COMMISSION.

The true Church of God is that Church which preaches to the world the true GOSPEL-of the GOVERNMENT of God, and of being born into the FAMILY of God. It preaches and publishes it in POWER, not in weakness-with a LOUD SHOUT, not a weak whisper-like THUNDER, not soothing and sleep-inducing. God's Church is a Church where God works MIRACLES, where the sick are really HEALED, even as Jesus set the example.

We find God's government more fully described in Eph. 4:11-12: "And He gave some, APOSTLES; and some, PROPHETS; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ."

We find prophets mentioned in the historic portions of the New Testament, but they did not possess administrative powers, and carried no authority. The New Testament Scriptures were not yet written. God used these prophets to convey messages direct from Him to the apostles. We find no prophets in the church today. The written Scriptures are now complete. There seems no need for prophets today. Furthermore, it is GOD who sets them in His Church, and if there are none, it is because GOD has not seen fit to set them in His Church. That is God's responsibility, not ours.

So, then, that leaves us with the executive and administrative spiritual offices in the Church. These offices of authority, then, are first, apostle; second, evangelist; third, pastor; fourth, teacher.

Christ the Living Head

Christ is the living HEAD of the Church!

HE sets the apostle in office. But we do find historic example in the New Testament of the apostle setting in office the evangelists, pastors and teachers, and even delegating to the evangelists the responsibility of ordaining pastors and other elders, and deacons.

By a study of other New Testament passages, we learn that there were, besides pastors, both preaching and non-preaching elders in local churches. All elders were teachers, but not all were preachers.

Also we learn by various Scriptures that all these officers are called ELDERS. A non-preaching elder, who must be a leader and apt to teach, is, of course, an elder. So is the preaching-elder, also the pastor, and also the evangelist. And even Peter, the apostle, was also an elder. In the New Testament the terms bishop and overseer are synonymous with elder.

Now in addition to these spiritual offices of administration and authority, THRU WHICH Christ governs His Church, we find also the helping offices of deacon and deaconess (I Timothy 2:8-13). The proper translation of Romans 16:1 should be "Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae." These were called to be helpers, in physical and material duties. Yet they had to be people filled with the Holy Spirit, and measuring up to Scriptural qualifications.

So there are the COMPLETE offices in God's Church-Christ the HEAD, then apostles, evangelists, pastors, minister elders, non-preaching elders, deacons, deaconesses.

These Offices 750 Years Ago

The last historic record of this complete government of God in the true Church is found around 1200 A.D. Because Peter Waldo was the man God raised up as His instrument for His work at that time, the world called the Church by the nick-name "Waldenses." But they themselves recognized only the name "The Church of God."

Peter Waldo occupied the office of APOSTLE. Apparently he, himself, did not claim the title. There is no record of the Church of that time directly using the title. But the historic facts do show that Peter Waldo occupied that office, and through him God exercised that authority. The actual title of Apostle was used by the Catholics against Peter Waldo. That he carried out the apostolic office in God's Church at the time is clear from the following: ". . . he (Peter Waldo) ... dared to usurp the office of the apostles, preaching the Gospel and the things he had committed to memory. . . . He sent men . . . to preach." (From page 55 of A History of the Vaudois Church, by Antoine Monastier.)

Peter Waldo founded a college for training pastors. EVANGELIST is the title of office often used to designate the young men trained in the Waldensian College of Pastors. The evangelists preached from country to country in Europe and the Middle East. (From page 45 of Emilio Comba's History of the Waldenses in Italy.) PASTORS: Over every local congregation were "barbes"-that is, pastors, as we say in English today. These also were trained at College. (From page 92 of Monastier's work.)

ELDERS: All ministers were elders in the Church at that time. There were always several elders over local congregations, but the leading elder-the pastor, or bishop designated the other local elders to "preach the Gospel where he thought best." (From page 254 of Comba's book.)

The only differences that existed between the pastors was that arising from age, or services performed, and personal respect. "The Waldensian Barbe"-pastor or minister-"may therefore be compared to the elders in Israel and in the primitive Church," says a historical document of the Waldenses. (From page 147 of Comba's work.)

DEACONS: This office of service was carried out in the Church of God at that time-in the 1200s. Both men and women did works of service, though primarily men because of physical hardships. (From page 254 of Comba's book, The History of the Waldenses in Italy.)

Some of these offices have continued in the Church to the present time. But since the days of Peter Waldo the entire form of God's government has not been perpetuated. God used no one of apostolic rank during the Sardis period of the Church of God.

All Offices Again Restored

Until the past very few years there was no real evidence that God had set anyone in the office of apostle in His Church today. Men cannot elect or place in office an apostle. And the only way men can know when God has set one in that office is BY THE FRUITS.

My personal office, from the beginning of the "Philadelphia" Church era, appeared to be that of evangelist. At that time God had used me to preach the Gospel in several towns and places, to bring numbers to repentance and conversion, to heal the sick, to raise up churches in several localities, and to ordain elders and deacons in them. But the work itself had not grown to the point where there were other evangelists whom I should send to raise up churches and ordain elders and deacons.

The first proclamation before the Church that God had filled the office of apostle was made by Herman Hoeh in his sermon at the Feast of Tabernacles, at Belknap Springs, Oregon, in 1951. He had not consulted me. I had no inkling of what he was to say. At the time his words hit my startled ears like an atomic bomb, and my first impulse was to deny and correct his statement immediately. Only propriety restrained this impulse. I felt Mr. Hoeh was just a little young, and carried away with himself. Never in my life had I thought of occupying such an office.

But in the light of events, the fact of how God has set up His Church today has become self-evident to all. It is GOD'S doing. If one does find, unexpectedly, that God has set him in such an

office, there is only one choice—he must accept it with full humility, realizing personal lack, and surrendering the self totally to GOD as an instrument in HIS hands, relying wholly upon God for guidance and every power and need.

For two years now, we have had evangelists in the Church. But none had filled the office of pastor. Only one was a minister-elder, and though we had a few deacons, we had never had a deaconess.

So it was with great rejoicing—and an occasion never to be forgotten when, during the Sabbath services at Pasadena on January 22, the evangelists joined me in appointing, first, Sister Annie M. Mann as a deaconess—an office she has long filled, but without the recognition. Next we installed Edward E. Eckert in the office of deacon.

Then followed the ordination of the new ministers. Herbert Burk McNair and George A. Meeker were ordained as preaching or minister-elders. Then, Dean C. Blackwell, who has held the office of minister-elder, was ordained for the higher office of pastor. Finally, Garner Ted Armstrong, Wayne C. Cole, and Norman A. Smith were also ordained as pastors.

Not Like Worldly Churches

This form of government, and the relative importance or rank of each office, is entirely different from the human forms of government and administration which men have set in the churches of this world.

In the world the most important office is usually called that of bishop in Protestant churches—or bishop, archbishop, cardinal, and pope, in the Roman Catholic Church. The worldly churches regard a bishop as one in authority over the pastors and churches in a designated district, or geographical area.

Next in importance is the pastor, in charge of a local church. Under him may be an assistant pastor, elders, deacons and deaconesses. The office of evangelist is generally regarded as of less importance than that of pastor. An evangelist, in the protestant churches, is usually a man who holds "revival meetings" in churches or tents or halls, in his own country. The preaching to foreign lands is relegated to missionaries. generally the least regarded office.

Thus the worldly churches reverse God's order. Christ's first, and most important commission was "Go ye into all the world, and preach THE GOSPEL to all nations." That commission, the churches today place last, not first. Jesus commanded His Church to keep separate from the world—to withdraw from worldly fellowship, and merely to go to the world in the preaching of the Gospel as a witness. But today's churches build their church edifices on busiest corners, competing with retail stores in "high-rent locations," and place large signs: "PUBLIC WELCOME." They invite the world to come to them. instead of going to the world. They invite the world to have fellowship with them, directly disobeying the command of Christ. Their own local church services, then, constitute their first line of evangelism, reinforced by the occasional "revival meetings."

Different Functions

The true WORK OF GOD, which is the function of His true Church, enters a field altogether different from the protestant churches of the world. Therefore, the duties of some of the offices are different.

We are all so accustomed to this world's system, that unless we understand this difference, unlearn the world's system, and fix firmly in mind the viewpoint of GOD'S government and its various functions, some, for example, might wonder why Norman Smith, who is technician and manager of our radio studio and control-room, was ordained as a pastor. Because we are steeped

in the non-Scriptural organization and functioning of this world's churches, many will assume that, to be a pastor, one must be a preacher in charge of a local church.

But in GOD'S government, as we find it clearly revealed in His Word, pastor is a rank of office next under that of evangelist, and higher than that of a ill mister-Elder. In God's government men are ranked according to their own spiritual and general ability, the responsibility of their function, and its importance in the over-all commission of getting the true GOSPEL to the world.

If Norman Smith were merely a technician, he would not have been ordained to any office whatever. His technical abilities are merely a supporting requirement for his very important ministry-one of the most important ministerial functions in the church today. Mr. Smith is a graduate of Ambassador College, as fully trained for the spiritual ministry as any of our pastors. He is my first assistant in the radio ministry to the whole world. I spend hours every week in consultation with him about the content of sermons in broadcasts. For some months now it has been his job to decide what sermons this nation, and even the whole world, shall hear.

This was made necessary during my trip to Europe, and other absences. It became necessary to re-broadcast former sermons. It was Mr. Smith's duty to determine which sermons were appropriate for this later date. In many instances most of a broadcast was suitable, but some few remarks were "dated"-timely at the time of original broadcast, but no longer suitable. In these instances Mr. Smith had to edit my sermons.

You will recognize instantly that I could never delegate to anyone but a thoroughly trained minister-one who is capable, and experienced, and fully responsible-the function of actually editing and, when necessary, rearranging my sermons to be heard by MILLIONS of people.

It was for this top-level ministerial service, of a completely spiritual nature, that Norman Smith was ordained to the office of pastor. He is fully competent to be placed as the settled pastor of any of our churches, but his present responsibility is of far greater importance in God's ministry.

This one example will have to suffice. Since God has opened the tremendous doors of radio and the printing press, the ministry assumes an entirely different requirement of functioning than the programs of the worldly churches.

Occasion for Great Rejoicing

Therefore, brethren, LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE!

Truly the harvest is plenteous, and the laborers FEW. Yet God is adding to His Church not only members, but called, consecrated, Spirit-filled, competent and trained and experienced young men for the WORK of His ministry.

For the first time in 750 years, ALL administrative offices of authority in God's government are complete in His Church! TIME RACES ON! Time is becoming short! God is moving fast! We have great work to do! Let us BE GLAD AND REJOICE-and every one of us put his shoulder to the wheel, doing his own UTMOST, in sacrifice, and in PRAYER!