

Seven Thunders (side 2)

It is mine, and I think that would have clarified the whole problem.

Completing the period of the history of the Church of God prior to the two witnesses that we have, of course, it is reflected in the fact that there is the candlestick with seven branches, and then there are the two separate candlesticks which follow the two witnesses, that is.

We should have recognized long ago that all seven stages of the Church precede the two witnesses, and not that six lead up to seventy-two, and there after the layer to see it, state of mind pops up parallel with the tribulation.

But that was our general picture because we didn't know how to account for such a state of mind of lukewarmness in Church that takes its spiritually rich and increases the goods and gives nothing yet as physical, poor, blind, and spiritually naked.

Not a Church labeled for heresy, but a Church where the internal attitude is so fundamentally a problem that one might have described people in that state as inactive members.

Never was there a time until now the history of this experience of the Church to be ever in that category of inactive members.

Every congregation now has a list of members who regularly attend an inactive member.

I'll just let you interpret that if you will.

Our inactive members just as reflected in the factory.

In 1975, we had 85,000 registered people, roughly, in the beast of tabernacles, and 75,000 this year, as an indication that we have at least 10,000 inactive members who were not even active enough to register in the United States, which frankly was not really addressed in the Worldwide News, where the intent was not to upset anybody.

See, there wasn't time to at least shake ourselves to awaken ourselves, but now we cobble ourselves and put ourselves to sleep.

We used to ask ourselves if this was a problem before it really was.

Now that it is, we want to run away from it.

There was a time we would do something about inactive membership, and now it is taken for granted because it is so prevalent.

Back then, Mr. Klineger, Klineger appeared, to take his time to pursue all the inactive members wouldn't be feeding all the active ones.

That's the state.

I hope it isn't as bad here as elsewhere, but I know that if you have something like 90,000 people in the country and there are always some who are newly baptized in Canada, some who cannot afford to have this percentage of plainly, openly inactive members without discussing the rest who are not that active, who sit among us, we have certainly 20 to 30% of the people who are drifting with our record who have lost their goal.

And if we were to pass through a stage in which this particular problem defined at the church of Laodicea would become characteristic of the growing number of people in our midst, partly because it's a characteristic of the world, the industrial, the economic world around us.

Whether we like it or not, every period of the history of the church of God parallels in some way the world around it.

When a generation went through the First World War, the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the rise of communism all through this time in the Korean War, that put instead all individuals without any question and affected the thinking of two to three generations.

There now is a growing element in the church of God that grew up without the experience of the Depression, without the Great Depression, without the experience of the Second World War or the Korean War, that grew up, if you please, to the Eisenhower era later, Kennedy Johnson, Nixon era, the scandal of Watergate, the fiasco of Vietnam, the fact that we have downs in our economy, that there's always been government to do something about it, the fact that more and more people aren't taken care of by welfare, the fact that standard of living is higher than it has really ever been, the fact that we have television reaching our homes more effectively than any minister can because you're attending church for two hours a week, you listen to television certainly harder than us in two hours a day if you're an abnormal family and more if you're a normal family.

And I guarantee you that the thinking from television, newspapers, magazines, and or movies if you go has a tremendous effect.

The devil had to reach into the homes of these media because the devil is working, of course, overtime.

It's a mistake from some in God's work.

And therefore many of us are affected by what we see coming into our home.

We're affected by Watergate's scandal and syndrome more than anything else, probably in the last few years, in a way that can affect the church of God because of mistakes if you please, and sins within the church that were tolerated unnecessarily long.

But God can forgive.

The question is, can we get Watergate in problems like that out of our mind politically, can we get it out of our mind internally in the church? Can we correct mistakes in the private lives of individuals? We have more people in the church of God today as laymen not excluding the ministry also, who are alcoholics.

Did I assume it hasn't struck the ministry? We have those who spoke more and more openly.

We know that there is a larger number than ever before who pop pills and don't just come from the drugstore.

And when these things occur, and people can do these things without ever evaluating their effect, all of us individuals will understand what the state of mind is.

And so what we have to face is the fact of chapter 10, which is the background that chapter 11 is really telling us, that the whole history of the church was to be completed before the two witnesses in terms of the work of seven candlesticks and not merely six.

This explains, therefore, that when the angel cried, and roared verse 3 of chapter 10, expressing, if you please, what was in that little book that certainly includes part of all the Bible, the Bible by comparison to all the literature that is written is just a small document.

This angel cried both out with this little book in his hand, and there were seven thunders which uttered their voices, not six.

And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, John was about to write what they said, and he was told to seal it up and write them not.

And because we didn't have any explanation of what was said, we assume this was all in the day of the Lord, instead of being before the two witnesses.

That's the point.

The seven thunders are before the two witnesses, not in the day of the Lord, under the sixth trope, because this is all an insect.

Now, when we recognize that indeed God's thunder is when he speaks, and he speaks through the church, and the church would be thundering God's message, and a little time magazine spoke of this darn strong voice as thundering God's message to the kingdom of God around the world.

Thunder, of course, can be more or less noisy, depending on how near.

Thunder can be distant and quiet.

Thunder can be very close and shockingly loud.

So the churches, through history, have spoken quietly or loudly.

Certainly the Church of God has been speaking recently very loudly, as it did in the days of the apostles.

The later Roman Empire and into the Middle Ages, even though the voice became very dulled and distant and muffled in the sardis era of the church, when it reached the birthright tribes who were so interested in their inheritance that religion didn't mean very much, it seems.

What we have as a reference to the fact that God was speaking through the churches, seven voices, seven thunders, they're not recorded because, in fact, a message that the church gives is a message of the kingdom of God, which is already laid out in Bible.

And it certainly isn't necessary to explain all of the statements made in the churches with respect to the various political leaders.

Why should we clutter up the book of Revelation with references to Charlemagne, to Otto the Great, previously to Justinian, and all the Roman Empire of that time, and Charles the Fifth, and Napoleon, and Mussolini, and Hitler? Those things we can learn when we meet the people in the resurrection who were used to speak to the world at that time and warn those nations, warn those leaders.

But in any case, we move along, that when the voice of the seven thunders has been, the voices of the seven thunders have been uttered, then we are told that it'll all be over, there'll be no longer a delay or a postponement.

That was terrible.

But in the name of the voice of the seventh angel, which is finally to come, which sounds beginning with verse 14 of chapter 11 of Revelation, then the mystery of God should be finished, which he has declared to his servants the prophets, who have been speaking all alone.

And the voice which I heard from Heaven spoke to me again, and then you have this little book which is to introduce, doing it to the two witnesses as distinct from the seven thunders.

See, he carries a little book of the seven thunders, then he has a little book to get at their two witnesses.

The same basic message spoke in seven times before, in seven great periods.

But what we have then is a clear indication that although the church of God and its various spiritual states and stages should have been one that has to always been.

This work began years ago at a time when the church was spiritually dead, though it had a name that was alive.

You find like the first section of chapter 3, the Sinest Confligation of Nature later.

And this work that Mr. Armstrong and the Eugene Church of God did from 1934 on, or in the broadcast of John III, in 1932 beginning in October, before we had to pay for it in the first of January of 1934.

We were side by side in the church of God's seventh day until 1938 when it was separated.

That is, the church of God's seventh day expelled the living branch of the church.

In 1938 or before, that was side by side.

That should be clear.

Now today everybody is invited on a ship, whether you're lukewarm, whether you're spiritually hot or cold.

Nobody wants to make a separation.

And so we have two spirits and attitudes that are predominant today, as well as any others that could be in any individual.

It reflects the state of mind in the world today where I could say quite clearly there are no standards.

Yes, in grouping and condo, like the world used to have it, there are no standards to speak of in the church.

You can go pretty far today and call yourself a Christian or a church member.

I had the sad situation of dealing with some children that the minister and I are taking care of for the moment.

We were waiting for the mother, so the other minister could take the whole family to dinner in an inexpensive place.

So we started to walk to the place where the mother didn't return and the little children spotted the car and they looked for the mother and found her in a bar.

She had left the children in the house without furniture from 2.30 to 6.00 o'clock when we left and certain would have left until 7.

But these are the people we meet.

Now, she has been baptized.

She is one of those who are near us, not yet among us, where it just gives an illustration of the problem.

And there are people who bring some of these habits and love them in themselves when they come into the church and it is all watched away in baptism.

What we have today is the fact that all new broadcasts were terminated in 1971 and October, exactly 38 years after they began the two 19-year time cycles that they should live up.

From that time on, we have had all kinds of spiritual problems besetting the church that reflect a permit and differences in attitude so that people are working together in the same group that we are now comfortable with each other.

We just have to face these things because a new spirit has become dominant.

Mr. Armstrong's message was once essentially the key of David referred to in the second phase of chapter 3 of Revelation.

Today, his message most certainly is the beginning of the creation of God, which is the way Christ appears in the congregation of way of the sea.

We live in a world where that is clearly a dominating force in the home and private lives of any individual unless we resist it.

The doors were opened to the Philadelphia era of God's church, as Mr. Herbert Armstrong has said and that work is going on.

But we have added a whole massive quantity of people who will compromise with the word who do not use the Bible as the standard by which they judge what they do in terms of vanity and dress, grooming, makeup, birthdays, voting, intermarriage between the races, you name it, they use the world as the standard and not the Bible.

And if the Bible doesn't expressly forbid something in the form of law, which is defined as sin, we're transgressed.

Then the assumption is we're not concerned with the examples of the Bible.

We are only concerned with doing everything we want to do that God doesn't forbid us from doing.

That's the state of most people in the world and it is a growing state of mind in the church.

We have gotten away from the implication of remaining unresponsive to the world and we have all kinds of people whose garments are very sordid who are being pulled back from the fires of Gehenna.

So bad it was that these girls, schools in Big Sandy, if you please, had a club for the girls for deflowering themselves.

And you wonder, got closed in girls' schools there where they were having more drugs, hard drugs passed around in our old school and in the public schools, play water in Big Sandy.

And not until the school was closed did the public schools realize that we had any good kids at all because the bad ones were being pumped into the public schools and where the rest of them were sent to the public schools they got the better picture of what the real character should have been.

And administrators and parents were tolerating for now what they were doing.

And it is that those who do good and does it not as said that the reflection of the world does come into God's church all too often.

Now, hopefully, as Mr. Gardner said, Armstrong said he can represent that kind of thing that has been allowed in our midst.

But it is a growing factor, I can guarantee to you that a larger and larger percentage of God's people are not going to attend the festivals.

I, old ministers today, I open responsibility when the Passover comes and they read about the breaking of the bread.

They don't ever define what it is because they don't believe God could heal them or anybody else.

Or if they did, that's a matter of God's precious act, not because Christ did anything and they don't know why they're breaking the bread because Jesus won't eat the whole world.

That's how far it has gone.

But of course, when Mr. Armstrong goes away, the mice will play spiritually speaking.

Mr. Armstrong is occupied in the greater administrative functions of his work after he had to learn certain lessons in his life in 1971 and 72.

But he has to be away at public meetings in Canada and here, where the mice will play.

So, the tenth chapter in closing the revelation is a picture of what God's Church has been doing in public and in private, sometimes in a great tribulation of the Middle Ages.

We have a situation where the Church has had to speak in a sense underground in the mountainous regions of the world and not in the great cities.

And before and after that, it has most certainly spoken in public what we are now doing and continuing to do.

But whatever came up again, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Rader, Mr. Fortune and any number of others are pointing out that in 1972 a fifth era began.

I didn't invent that word at that point.

They used it.

And indeed it has.

And we're marching side by side.

There are some of God's congregations who have heresy in them, like certain churches, Revelation 2 and 3.

Some who lost their first love that I can name.

Some who have retained it.

Some who are spiritually dead.

There are many who are dedicated to holding to the word of God and their growing number is becoming lukewarm.

And that's going to be the dominant state.

And then I'm going to separate it because it can happen to you, it can happen to me, and that kind of attitude you cannot administer in the same way that you can administer outright doctrinal errors, outright sins.

What you're going to see is not a church full of sins in the sense of violations of the Ten Commandments as much as it is just compromising the word of God and going as far to the world as you can.

It's an attitude.

And that's why the battle was given up by Mr. Armstrong when he was analyzing this problem of holding fast and permissiveness and the day the church may be characterized with more and more permissiveness.

Parents no longer discipline their children and no longer teach the children the Bible so we have introduced Sunday schools of the Sabbath to make up for the lack of that kind of training at home.

And that's the state of affairs.

We might as well wake up to the fact and I'm speaking plainly.

Parents no longer discipline children participate on the Sabbath, Friday night in sports.

You'd be surprised how the dating habit has gone so far beyond our own fellowship.

And a little wonder, of course, that children date outside of the church because most in the church are often worse than the responsible individuals outside when their parents haven't trained them.

There are more people outside sometimes in certain areas who have withheld themselves from the world than certain families whose children have been allowed to become like the world.

The years after the world perhaps had already passed through a phase.

And more short skirts in God's church in this country, for instance, after the world got longer because they never had a chance to have short people on it.

Well, we've used makeup about five to ten years after the world has passed through certain phases.

But that's, of course, to be expected because they've always wanted to anyway.

They're only trying to catch up.

Jesus Christ said he's going to deal with that kind of problem.

He himself will have to spew them out and the tribulation will come.

And those who remain faithful, God will protect.

Not in the streets of New York and Los Angeles, but protect as he defines it in Revelation 12.

So what we have here in response to Mr. Armstrong's co-worker letter which was not quite as clear as he said and would have wanted it to be, is a reference to the fact that he is doing a work now which is only a prelude yet that is to be done.

And by two witnesses, and we're not told yet who they are, we may surmise who they are.

As Mr. Armstrong once said, it could even be Billy Graham or one of them, but he'd have to be recanted and converted yet.

So let us leave after God's judgment as much wiser that he should decide who they are than the two future he.

You see, they're going to die those two witnesses.

But before you decide you want to be one of them, you want to count the cost.

For a fact, Mr. Kleininger, for giving me the opportunity, I wish all of you well, and I hope you will take note of God does make known to Mr. Herbert Armstrong in terms of what is going to be developing the Middle East and the Mediterranean world.

I would point out that one of the brethren and some brethren do watch, and others watch hardly at all when they have told me who had mentioned something before, said it is now in the news of the Roman Catholic Church, which has called the proximate corner of the investments in the city of Rome outside Vatican City, which is the sacred state, which is quietly selling its property.

Rome is no longer declared a holy city.

The Church no longer has a special relationship established in 1929 by Wilcovini.

They are pulling out, and there are just as many investments in Rome and probably in other parts of Italy, too, but I can guarantee you there's a city open that I believe where they're going to re-invest and move to.

God bless God.