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HOW WAS THE CHURCH FORMED?--

BY POLITICIANS OF THE STATE
OR UNDER DIRECTION OF G O D ?

By Herbert W. Armstrong
(September 26, 1979)

NOW politicians trying to take over and run the Worldwide Church of God are saying that I, as an apostle, have no voice or authority in how church funds are expended, but only in what they term "ecclesiastical functions"--while on the other hand, Mr. Stanley R. Rader, because he is not yet ordained, has no authority in the church's "ecclesiastical" affairs.

In other words, the politicians are trying to tell us on what basis the Church of God must be organized.

This Church was founded in 31 A.D. by Jesus Christ. The present era of that same Church was founded in the autumn of 1933, according to the biblical pattern as ordained by the Almighty God. The present era was started in Oregon, not in California. Yet California politicians are now trying to tell us how it should have been formed.

First, although it is organized according to GOD'S pattern in the Bible, it is not a secular organization, but a spiritual organism.

In I Corinthians 12, the Word of God tells us that in addition to spiritual GIFTS, "there are DIFFERENCES OF ADMINISTRATIONS, but the same Lord. ... But all these (spiritual gifts) worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He (God) will....For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (not politicians).... And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that...miracles..." (I Corinthians 12:5-28).

In Ephesians 4 these ranks are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are for the Church's WORK (verse 12).

Very evidently these officers are listed as ranks in authority. For example, only four prophets are mentioned in the New Testament, and not one set any church doctrines or beliefs. Not one exercised any authority. There are no prophets in the church today, and no record of any for 1900 years.

The word "apostle" means, literally, "one sent forth" with the Gospel Message. However, Matthew 16:18 and 18:1-2,18 show that an apostle carries top authority on the human level, under Christ. For example, he is in authority over finances for spreading the Gospel though financial details may be delegated to one under him.

When the Church of God was founded in 31 A.D., it was founded, NOT on any form enforced by civil political government, but founded on the apostles (N.T.) and prophets (O.T.), Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2). The living Jesus Christ was the HEAD of the Church. It was a spiritual organism, not a secular organization. From the very beginning it was opposed by civil political government. Its original membership of 120 (Acts 1:15) started that day of Pentecost. That same inaugural day God added about three thousand members to the church--all baptized that day.

For some two years the membership, under the leadership of the apostles, and of Christ from heaven, multiplied.

Jesus had commissioned His apostles to be sent forth proclaiming Christ's Gospel Message of the Kingdom of God. In spite of political secular government, they started going into all the world with this Kingdom Message. By what means? By the means then available to them--afoot, and by sailboat. They certainly did not consult the political governments regarding their manner of going forth into all the world with the Gospel.

After two years, severe opposition set in. Much of it was by false apostles, but these soon sought political government persecution and opposition against proclaiming Christ's Gospel. Peter and John, and Paul and others were thrown into jail overnight--but God by supernatural power released them. Though persecuted, even as the same Church is today, the Work of proclaiming the Kingdom of God went on.

In our day Jesus Christ prepared and raised me up as His chosen apostle to carry on the proclaiming of the Gospel worldwide, and ministering to the membership in local congregations.

In our day we live in a totally different world. Especially in means of transportation and communication. The living Christ started me on radio in January, 1934, and through the printed message beginning February, 1934. Comparative rapid mail delivery was by then available, and rail travel, beside the telephone. We first went on television in July, 1955. Finally came air travel, first prop planes, then jets.

The Work of God started from Eugene, Oregon. No state government gave us instructions as to how the church and its work should be organized or conducted. In 1947 headquarters were moved to Pasadena, California. The Work was growing 30% a year. To conduct the growing operations of Christ's Great Commission, Ambassador College was founded in 1947. It was the ONLY college on earth ACCREDITED by GOD!

It had become necessary to incorporate, and the Work has been conducted strictly according to the legally stated PURPOSES of the Church in our incorporation and our legally required Constitution and Bylaws. In all such matters, we complied fully with state corporation laws and requirements.

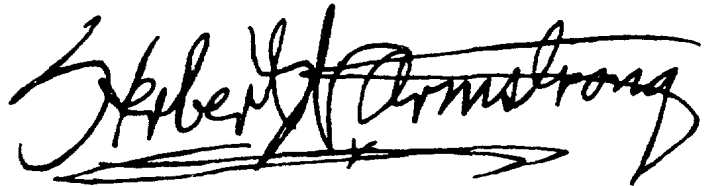
It was not until January 3, 1979, 46 years after the raising up of this era of the Church of God, that the Church of GOD suffered persecution by the Attorney General's office of the State of California.

For the first time, to my knowledge, a state civil political government within the United States claimed that it owned all Church property, and was empowered to fire the apostle of the living Christ, and reorganize and OPERATE the Church of the living GOD! Although God commands us, in the Bible, to be subject in our personal and individual lives to the political government of man which has jurisdiction over us in ordinary processes of law and order, yet when authorities of human civil government commanded the Apostle Peter to cease proclaiming the Gospel, Christ's apostle replied we MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN. He did not "cave in." Neither did we!

This Church was founded by Jesus Christ. It is formed and organized on HIS pattern.

Even if our lives are at stake--even at threat of imprisonment, we shall give our very lives, if necessary, to carry on the Worldwide Church of God, according to GOD'S direction in His Word.

Now we are in a battle with one of the largest states in the Union to determine WHO IS LORD--CAESAR, OR CHRIST! We are willing even to sacrifice our LIVES, if necessary--but, like the Apostle Peter, we shall obey GOD rather than man!



THREE NEW EVANGELISTS ORDAINED!

On Thursday afternoon, September 27, at approximately 3 p.m. in the home of God's Apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, there wasn't a dry eye as Mr. Armstrong ordained three new evangelists. In alphabetical order, the three men are Mr. Ellis LaRavia, Mr. Stanley Rader and Mr. Joseph Tkach. Also ordained to the rank of local elder was Mr. Kevin Dean, and long time personal staff member Mrs. Rona Martin was ordained a deaconess. Mr. Armstrong commented that it was a "long-overdue" ordination for Rona. Mr. Aaron Dean and Mr. Mel Olinger are to be ordained this coming Sabbath to the rank of local elder and deacon, respectively.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services