

Church of God History series

Herbert W Armstrong's Early Beliefs and Doctrines



**By Craig M White
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Herbert W Armstrong's Early Beliefs and Doctrines

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Mr Armstrong met Prince Charles in 1982

Contents

Suggested Reading (articles and studies).....	4
Introductory Remarks	5
What was learned from the Church of God (Seventh Day)	6
Strictness, Legalism and Unclean Meats.....	9
Church Governance.....	12
A Fair Chance of Salvation for all Mankind	15
Born Again Teaching	17
Pentecost Date.....	19
Three Angels Messages	19
Origin of the Doctrine	19
Church of God (Seventh Day).....	21
Enter Herbert W Armstrong.....	22
From Third Angels Message to Ezekiel's Warning Message	28
Pyramidology	30
The Godhead.....	33
Concluding Remarks.....	38
Appendix. Which is the One True Church of God?	41
Appendix. The Great Pyramid	45
Appendix. Extracts from <i>All About Water Baptism</i> by Herbert W Armstrong	49
Bibliography.....	51

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Our purpose and desire is to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's message & mission and provides further support to its traditional doctrinal positions.

Suggested Reading (articles and studies)

- *Church of God History. Tending to the Past. Preserving for the Future*
- *Doctrinal Heritage of the Church of God in the Nineteenth Century*
- *Herbert W Armstrong. Man of God*
- *Historic Church of God Fundamentals of Belief. Tracking the Development of Core Doctrines*
- *History of the Fair Chance Doctrine*
- *History of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Radio/Worldwide Church of God*
- *History of the Plain Truth magazine*
- *History of the World Tomorrow Broadcast*
- *Lists and Charts of the Early Years of the Ministry of Herbert W Armstrong*
- *Pioneers of the Worldwide Church of God*
- *The Final Year of Herbert W Armstrong*
- *Further articles and research [here](#)*

Introductory Remarks

I am of the opinion that it is important to be upfront with the data and not be involved with redacting or other such measures lest members and seekers become offended (believe it or not). And this includes the history of the Church and its early beliefs under Mr Armstrong.

Having read about many teachings that are discussed herein and more in the mid-1970s, I find none of this as offensive or as new historical 'revelations' but rather as just historical development and improved understanding by a man God used in the 20th century.

No one is perfect in understanding or behaviour as any honest human will attest. But God has it all in hand and knows what He is doing.

After all, Mr Armstrong grew in understanding and knowledge over time – so should we. In most fundamentals he was 'steady as she goes' but not in everything as we shall discover below.

As I noted in my letter concerning a pioneer of the Worldwide Church of God, Herman Hoeh, published in "Readers pay tribute to Dr. Hoeh," *The Journal*, issue 95 (Dec 2004):

"As the Scriptures indicate, knowledge shall increase in the end time (Daniel 12:4). This is often accomplished by building on the understanding, knowledge and research of predecessors. Not only is raw knowledge increased, but so is qualitative value added to doctrine with deeper and more meaningful insights. This was a part of his capacity and the heritage he has left behind."

Hoeh himself wrote in 1959:

"This is the time of the end when prophecies hidden for ages are being revealed. TRUTH is being restored, knowledge is rapidly increasing. But knowledge brings RESPONSIBILITY; it becomes DANGEROUS if not rightly handled." (*A True History of the True Church*, p. 30)

The idea that knowledge was restored to the Church and then marketed and spread around the world was taught but it seems didn't really 'sink in' and many did not fully comprehend the truth of the matter.

Later, Herbert W Armstrong, the human founder of the Worldwide Church of God noted in a book published in 1985:

"... even this Church, until after the year of 1933, had lost many of these vital truths. At least 18 basic and essential truths have been restored to the true Church since that year." (*Mystery of the Ages*, p. 251).¹

Earlier, in "Personal from the Editor," *Good News*, August 1969, Mr Armstrong wrote:

¹ I think what he meant was that many truths were restored to many in the Church, as most of those he listed were already extant, though not in an in-depth way. Nor marketed and spread around the world in any grand way.

"Many NEW truths have come to light in the past twenty years. Some has been revealed through various of God's ministers - my son Garner Ted, Mr. Roderick Meredith, Dr. Herman Hoeh, Mr. Raymond McNair, Mr. Albert Portune, Mr. Charles Hunting, Dr. Ernest Martin, Dr. Charles Dorothy, and others. And also God has continued to reveal important and basic truths through me." (p. 6)

He did not say that these truths were not extant elsewhere or prior to his calling but that they were assembled, upgraded and used within the Church.

However, the seeds of the Work raised up under Herbert W Armstrong, were sewn decades earlier by other Sabbatarians and non-Sabbatarian researchers. Much of this formed the basis for a lot of fundamental doctrines of the Church of God (Seventh Day) which Mr Armstrong was a part of.

In this article I choose to examine a few doctrines Mr Armstrong held to in his early years, not every doctrine. Nor will I go into extensive detail but rely on quoting him and making some comments. Some of these have already been addressed in articles such as:

- *Do Church Eras Exist?*
- *Herbert W Armstrong. Man of God*
- *History of the Fair Chance Doctrine*
- *How the Israel Identity Truth entered the Church of God*
- *The Doctrinal Heritage of the Church of God in the Nineteenth Century*

God certainly works in mysterious ways and the various circuitous means and testing of this and that doctrine prior to being accepted and formalised is rather interesting and provides further insights into our history and heritage. We need a process that fleshes out what information we have with additional research so that we can assemble a more complete history than we have.

What was learned from the Church of God (Seventh Day)

The following were learned from the Church of God (Seventh Day) and their ministers by Mr Armstrong:

- Annihilation of the wicked
- Basic Christian living
- Church eras
- Clean & unclean meats
- Divorce & Remarriage
- Healing²

² Early on he became suspicious of medicines. In a letter dated 9 August 1927, he wrote to relatives (not sure if they were his or Loma's parents): "He reveals that he is coming to a holistic understanding of religion: "You can say what you want to, but I am becoming more and more convinced that religion was intended to minister not alone to man's soul, but also to the mind and the body." (p. 4) He spends some time explaining Loma's illness and healing. On page 5 he actually states that "I am thru with doctors and drugs, we should place our faith in a higher power."

- Holy spirit is a force, not a personage (though that took him a few years to accept)
- Laying on of hands
- Man does not have an immortal soul
- Millennium on earth
- New birth culminates in the resurrection (during the early decades of the 20th century the Church of God generally taught this)³
- Passover on 14 Abib
- Seven resurrections of the Roman Empire
- The Christian reward is not heaven
- Tithing
- Water baptism
- Wednesday Crucifixion-Saturday Resurrection

It never ceases to amaze me that some people, utterly fruitless, have such big babbling blazing mouths spitting words of hatred toward a deceased man. Filled with bitterness, they harangued Mr Armstrong over some minor point of doctrine or something they have misinterpreted about his statements on prophecy. Yet these 'pipsqueaks' that have produced nothing but venom, stand up before the congregations hammering at him, not knowing what they are saying, offending loyal members, putting off newcomers and showing their ignorance and haughtiness. Yet there is no right of reply to these 'pipsqueaks', know-it-alls who are utterly unproductive, negative and dogmatic about something they know little about.

Notice what Mr Armstrong wrote about these attitudes in another Church amongst a few of the people he encountered there. Firstly, some of the ministry were jealous of him, antagonistic and possessed a competitive spirit (*Autobiography*, Vol 1, p. 474).

These jealous ministers were looking for all kinds of excuses for having a go at him that they then picked on his wife according to the *Good News*, June/July 1980 (a series titled "The History and the Beginning and Growth of the WCG"). It is a pity that some tried to provoke one to that extent, but what else is new? Nothing has changed.

Mr Armstrong later wrote "... opposition from other ministers, both within this church and without, was met at every turn continually" (*Autobiography*, Vol 1, p. 319). In that aforementioned series he writes "Persecution from their [jealous] ministers continued" (*Good News*, September 1980, p. 28). Further:

"Always the brethren ... 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**" (*Good News*, August 1980, p. 4). [emphasis mine]

You can read about Herbert Armstrong's experiences in the last few chapters of the *Autobiography* (Vol 1). It was merciless how they tried to turn the membership against him. There is surely nothing new under the sun.

³ NB: the Church of God (Seventh Day) does not necessarily hold to all of the above today. Or they may have made amendments to them.

He didn't go through all those experiences just to be persecuted again after he had died and for everything God had raised up via him to be destroyed! The immense amount of truth restored was not restored just to be watered-down and shelved (with the exception of the Sabbath and Holy Days according to some among us). If people don't wish to hold on to the full truth but wish to rather to change it, they can always return to the apostate church.

In Volume 1 of his *Autobiography* he wrote:

"August 20th to 29th, inclusive, a camp meeting was held in "Cabin City," on the highway just north of Eugene.

"This particular camp meeting was the last of our cooperation with the Salem, West Virginia branch of the Church. The son of one of the so-called "12 apostles" of that church informed me of a plot, hatched at a meeting he attended with his father, in which the so-called "leading ministers" of that group intended to use this camp meeting, of which we at Eugene were hosts, to attempt to discredit and ruin the radio broadcast.

"I had announced the camp meeting over the air, weeks ahead, and invited all listeners to attend. Immediately, on learning of the plot, I appointed a Committee to be in charge of the camp meeting, and had them go to the "leading ministers" who already were in Oregon, demanding that all antagonisms and derogatory insinuations against me personally and the radio program be withdrawn from their plans. They refused, saying other ministers from the east coast were coming, whom they could not muzzle, and they were determined to ruin the broadcast if possible.

Thereupon, I announced there would be no camp meeting. In two days the "apostle" customarily in charge of these annual camp meetings arrived in Eugene from Southern California. He came straight to our home.

What was this, he asked, about my threatening to call off the camp meeting?

"That's right," I said, explaining to him the conspiracy to defame the broadcast and ruin it.

"But you can't stop the meeting from being held," he exclaimed.

"But I can, and will," I replied. "You see, I have rented this camp grounds in my own name, and I alone control it. I will not allow the grounds to be used. I have the entire member mailing list. I shall send out notices informing all of the FACTS, telling them it is cancelled, and not to come." (pp. 529-30) [emphasis mine]

So you can see him standing up to jealous ministers. He had every right to stand up to those attempting to destroy him and preventing him from using his spiritual gifts as everyone should. There must be no blockage between the members and God.

You see, as many have experienced, jealousy leads to envy and all that entails: the tripping up of people by engaging in tactics to undermine them including engaging in lies and defamation.

Strictness, Legalism and Unclean Meats

Mr Armstrong's views on when to baptize someone was that although we need to repent and be baptised, repentance was in a general sense and not every detail which is overcome during one's ensuring life.

One was smoking (he discusses his overcoming of smoking on pp. 288-89 of *The Autobiography*) – and that was after baptism:

"I kept awake on the job nights by smoking a pipe -- my first habitual smoking. In just six months this overwork and loss of sleep exacted its toll, and I was sent to the hospital with a very severe case of typhoid fever." (*Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong*, Vol 1, p. 59)

"Then, immediately **after I was baptized**, the matter of smoking had to be settled." (p. 288)

"I knew, of course, there is no specific command, "Thou shalt not smoke." But the absence of a detailed prohibition did not mean God's approval." (p. 289)

Similarly with unclean foods and specifically pork. Here is what he wrote in his *Autobiography*:

"The "Pork" Obsession

The opposition through the spring and summer of 1933 had come through the two ministers who had moved up to Oregon from California, Elders Sven (Sam) A. Oberg, and A. J. Ray. Mr. Ray was developing, through the summer, a sort of obsession against the eating of "unclean" meats -- pork, ham, bacon, seafoods, and those labelled "unclean" in Leviticus 11. **The emphasis he continually put on this doctrine, almost with vehemence, rather gave the impression that, in his eyes, the eating of pork, which came in for his greatest condemnation, was the greatest of sins.**

About the time the Firbutte school meeting started, July 9, 1933, Mr. Ray began aiming his "anti-pork" guns directly at me. He demanded that I state definitely my stand on this question. I had written him a Biblical exposition of the subject, showing that it was a physical FOOD question, rather than a spiritual or Gospel subject. Unless a man broke the tenth commandment by lusting after it, the eating of pork did not violate the Ten Commandments, which constitute a SPIRITUAL law.

I quoted Mark 7:15-23, where Jesus explained that sin is a spiritual principle – that which is coming out of the heart of a man -- evil thoughts leading to actions of adultery, murder, theft, deceit, blasphemy, pride -- violations of the Ten Commandments; but that nothing from without, entering in his mouth, defiles the man spiritually. Jesus was speaking of SPIRITUAL principles, and SIN as a spiritual offense.

I explained that I was well aware that the unclean animals were unclean even before the Flood -- not suddenly pronounced so by Moses. I also explained that I was well aware of the fact they are still unclean, and unfit for the physical digestive process; that Peter's vision of the sheet was given, not to

cleanse unclean animals, but to show Peter that he should not regard a Gentile MAN as unclean (Acts 10:28).

Also that I well understood that I Timothy 4:1-5 did not make unclean foods digestible and healthful, but only those which are "creatures of God," and "sanctified" which means SET APART by the Word of God and prayer." The Word of God does NOT sanctify the flesh of swine, or set it apart for holy use -- but rather forbids its use for food. Undoubtedly millions of people have contracted disease from eating unclean meats. But, I pointed out, it still was a PHYSICAL violation, not a spiritual sin. The Kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17) is NOT meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit -- SPIRITUAL things.

And, I explained, I was commissioned to preach to the outside world **The Kingdom of God, which is NOT preaching meat and drink**. I explained that neither I nor any of my family ate unclean meats; that I taught all converts not to eat unclean meats, as a matter of good health. But I asked him if he could show me by the Bible where I was in error, or any Scriptural commission to preach sermons to the unconverted on the eating of pork. **I told him I refused to make this food question a subject for sermons to the unconverted**, unless he could show me Scriptural grounds for so doing.

He was unable to reply. Instead, **he set out with renewed zeal to discredit me** and get me ousted from the ministry.

There was a ministers' meeting one Sunday afternoon, about four weeks after the Firbutte school meetings had started, at the Jeans schoolhouse, four miles west of Firbutte. Both Mr. Ray and Mr. Oberg came to talk to me. **They were not friendly**. Mr. Ray, especially, was wrathful" (pp. 442-44) [emphasis mine]

Mr Armstrong never changed his views on this to my knowledge having listened to so many sermons by him.⁴

Noticed how he mentioned that these elders were unfriendly and dictatorial – yet many have not taken that to heart to this day.

So, Mr Armstrong was also opposed to legalism and extremism. Unfortunately the Radio/Worldwide Church of God did take on some of these attributes around the mid-1950s to the early 1970s or so. Despite the efforts of Mr Armstrong and others, these issues continued on to some degree to this day in various groups. But there are those who refuse to change and just will not learn the way of outgoing concern for others.

"But elderly Mr. G. A. Hobbs was a stern, fiery little old man — a stickler for proper form and system, and proper "authority" for everything. He had been an Adventist since a young man — probably beginning somewhere around 1870, or perhaps earlier.

Adventists during those earlier years **were very strict, legalistic, and exacting**. Mr. Hobbs had left the Adventists rather late in life when he saw clearly, in

⁴ I personally would not eat unclean food if put in front of me at someone's dinner party as some have suggested one could. I should add that the various commandments of God have letter of the law, spiritual aspects and typological teachings behind them, including unclean meats.

the Bible, that the Millennium will be spent on earth and not in heaven. But he retained his **strict disciplinary** teaching to his death.” (p. 387)⁵ [emphasis mine]

“Now the newly arrived Mr. Ray raised the question of whether to employ Mr. Oberg, or me. A business meeting was called. I believe it was held at the church building in Harrisburg. Mr. Oberg was a man of 53. He kept himself in vigorous physical condition by strenuous calisthenic exercises every morning, including about 100 "push-ups." If Robert L. Taylor had swept the members off their feet, impressing them with his "spirituality" and preaching power in 1931, Sam Oberg did much more!

In fact, **he appeared to be so perfect, so spiritual**, my wife and I thought of Hebrews 13:2, stating that a stranger might be an angel being entertained unawares! He seemed too perfect to be human. He was **strict in punctuality**, spiritual in language and phraseology, immaculate in appearance, glib of speech, powerful in preaching delivery.

Yet, in spite of his almost awe-inspiring effect on the members, they had all liked and loved me, and still looked to me for the leadership to get the gospel going out. I had been ordained by them and employed by them before. I do not remember the details now, but I was employed instead of Mr. Oberg.” (pp. 415-16) [emphasis mine]

“Sam Oberg **made a fetish of stern neatness, punctuality, and certain outward mannerisms designed to lead others to think him righteous**. Actually, although **he was unreasonably stern** with his little 3-year-old daughter, he knew about as little of proper child rearing as anyone I ever knew. He went to **the extreme on stern demands for certain mannerisms of decorum, and punished his child with over-severity**, while at the same time he completely neglected her in most other ways, failed to properly teach and train her, and allowed her to do other things that should not have been done. There have been times, since I have been changed by God's Spirit, that righteous indignation arose instantly to white-hot heat. This was one of them. But I prayed, and God helped me to put down anger. Also it came to mind what to do. You may not think God put it there, but I do.

At Harrisburg on Sunday, Mr. Helms, after opening the meeting with prayer, gave me the floor first. I think this was a surprise to Messrs. Oberg and Ray. I told the Board members and other brethren assembled that I understood this meeting had been called as an inquisition, to crucify me by false charges. I told them I did not wish to defend myself. I told them I knew I was full of faults and weaknesses, the same as each of them. I told them I had been striving, and with God's help, overcoming many of these human frailties and weaknesses and habits since my conversion, some six years before — but I had not yet reached perfection. I felt that each of them — and Messrs. Oberg and Ray — lived in glass houses, also, in case any had a hating spirit of wishing to throw stones.

⁵ Of interest is that some thought that Mr Armstrong was an Adventist. An example is a letter to a Mrs Clarke, refuting that (1 March 1928).

I stood there and confessed many specific faults and weaknesses, and asked them if they would pray for me that I might have help in overcoming them. Their eyes began to fill with tears — all but Oberg and Ray.

Then I quickly ended by saying that Mr. Oberg and Mr. Ray might say anything they wished against me — but that I understood they planned to accuse my wife falsely, and I then told them with all the power I had that God made me my wife's defender, **and that if either of them dared to utter one word against my wife, I would — if need be — close their mouths before they could finish the first sentence.** I did not specify the means. This was said with blazing eyes, and a sharp voice!⁶

I sat down.

Mr. Helms then called on Oberg and Ray. I do not remember what they said — if anything. I do know that there was nothing left for them to say against me — for I had said it all myself before them. And they somehow must have known that *I MEANT IT* when I said I would defend my wife's honor. They were silent about her.

I do know the result. Their plot backfired! I was not discharged.

Rather, the brethren were still looking to me for leadership.

But Mr. Oberg and Mr. Ray were not through gunning for me. There was much more to come later!" (pp. 426-28)

And there we have it. Many have experienced similar behaviours toward themselves behind the back of Mr Armstrong, but he did not approve it.⁷

Church Governance

The Church of God, as it re-assembled in the late 1800s, had a ruling board and elders. It then split in 1905/06 over those that wished to have local autonomy and those that preferred a bit more centralised leadership.

Similar battles emerged in the early 1930s. The two largest groups re-combined in 1949 with some few remaining separate from the combined body which is named the Church of God (Seventh Day) and now based in Denver, Colorado.

In this context we can see that Herbert W Armstrong changed his views on governance. His article on the subject published in the February 1939 *Good News* under the title "Did Christ

⁶ This was published in 1973, but years later he must have recalled what was said, because in 1980 he wrote this: "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!** ... and the brethren would have backed me in shutting their mouths from accusing my wife." ("The History and the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God," *Good News*, June/July 1980, p. 24) [emphasis mine]

⁷ He evidently did not like dictatorial behaviours at that time. For instance he noted Andrew Dugger's "iron control" of the Church of God and that Mr Dugger "had been accused of dictatorship, bossism... I had not as yet met him, and did not judge." (*Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong*, Vol 1, p. 469)

Reorganize the Church?" is well known.⁸

Much has been made of this article with this or that claim concerning it. Most notably, various ones see in this article an excuse to revert to local congregationalism. Yet the thrust of the article did not dwell on that aspect but on excessive control. In fact, with the omission of a few lines here and there, the article may be current today.

It was written in reaction to the structures being set up in other Churches and he noted the errors he perceived within those structures – the backdrop to the article should be considered prior to one wishing to revert to localism or changing modern structure.

Mr Armstrong held to this view since his calling and wrote about it even in 1938 in a short article titled "What is the Bible Basis for Unity?":

"The TRUE Church of God must have UNITY! But what is the BIBLE BASIS for that unity? ROME'S basis of unity is DOCTRINE! Every Catholic priest is forced to speak as he is TOLD - all SPEAK THE SAME THING! This is the basis for unity in every Protestant Church - the basis of BABYLON - of SATAN! GOD'S basis is LOVE! "Though I understand ALL KNOWLEDGE, and have not LOVE"" (*The Bulletin of the Churches of God*, 2 June 1938)

Later he stated in an explanatory note:

"The CHURCHES OF GOD are strictly nondenominational. We are not affiliated with any denominational project. The true CHURCH OF GOD is not a sect, a division, or a denomination. We have no ambition to build up a denominational machine or organization. We are not independent, but we are DEPENDENT upon God. We wish to promote nothing further than to spread the last warning Message with power to the multitudes, to be used in the salvation of such as God calls, and humbly to minister to as many of those called-out ones whom God has added to His Church, and who wish to assemble with us in peace and harmony based on LOVE, for our mutual edification. We recognize that all born-again souls become members of the spiritual Body of Christ, the true CHURCH OF GOD. We believe in The Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus Christ."

⁸ Some are "circulating an article which was written clear back in 1939 (and was the subject of fairly lengthy discussions during the recent Ministerial Conference) about church government; it was written long prior to the years when my father and early pioneer ministers in this phase of God's Church ever came to understand the truth about church government as it really "should be"! Church government was one major doctrine which my father and others with him in this ministry grew into as NEW KNOWLEDGE! Now some are beginning to circulate this old article as if alleging that my father was guilty of some extreme 35 or 40-year-old plan of deliberate manipulation of the scriptures to further his own ends!

"NONSENSE! All of the early pioneer students know full-well that my father and those with him in those days grew into a broader biblical understanding of church government. In the first place, the type of church government which Mr. Armstrong was writing about in that article involved voting, pulling names out of hats in selection of ministerial duties, and every assorted form of chicanery and politics." ("Editorial", *The Bulletin*, 12 February, 1974, p. 9)

A further, longer article on the subject of governance appeared in the same edition of the Bulletin and you can read it in full at the **Appendix. Which is the One True Church of God?**

Mr Armstrong iterated his stance on localism in "Why should we have Churches?" *The Good News Letter*, 20 March 1944.

There can be no doubt that Mr Armstrong made some basic changes to Church governance in the early 1950s – due to the Church adopting a corporate structure some years after that article was written, it managed to perform a great Work. Local congregationalist structures do not produce major fruits nor a united, combined, efficient means to reach a huge audience. Nor consistency in doctrine.

Let us ask a couple of questions and attempt to answer them in an attempt to understand the evolution and changes in church governance:

1. What sort of governance structure did the Church of God have in the 1930s and 40s?

Local autonomy per the above was believed initially. In late 1933 the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) based in Stanberry, Missouri split with Herbert W Armstrong going with Andrew Nugent Dugger's new group based in Salem, West Virginia. Herbert Armstrong was a member of their Oregon Conference Church of God (Seventh Day) up until the division (their structure was to have conferences in the various States).

The reason for the split was chiefly over governance though some minor doctrinal differences and personality issues were involved. Mr Armstrong was one of those that believed in local autonomy at that time.

2. What sort of governance structure did the Church of God teach early 1950s-early 1970s?

By the early 1950s Herbert Armstrong had accepted a more centralised form of governance. The influence of certain senior ministers, the effects of WW2 and knowledge of corporate structure was what led to the formulation of a structure that, in many ways, emulated the sort of business structures of the day.

This is how Mr Armstrong explained how this came about in an article published in the *Good News*, August 1969:

"I had tried to fellowship with the Church of God which, in my early days of conversion, was located at Stanberry, Missouri. But their ministers fought me, did all they could to discredit me, break up the broadcast, hinder and stop THE VERY WORK OF GOD! Soon they became divided, with one group making headquarters at Salem, West Virginia."

"But in my days of trying to work with them, between 1927 and somewhere around 1941 to 1947, there was so much controversy over what constituted God's CHURCH GOVERNMENT that I, myself, became completely confused on that point. I could see that their systems were so wrong that I assumed that

God's Church is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, and not a church ORGANIZATION. I did not want to assume any rule or authority that I ought not, and consequently when troublemakers and wrong attitudes came into our little Church in Eugene, Oregon, I wielded no authority whatsoever, and the result was a church split in two.

Perhaps the beginning of the Biblical KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION we have enjoyed since the college was founded was the clearing up of the Biblical teaching on CHURCH GOVERNMENT. Personally I had gotten so CLOSE to all the errors among the "Sardis" people - with a "General Conference" type government at Stanberry, and a "12 apostles - seven deacons - and 70 elders" type at Salem, West Virginia, that I was like the man so close to one tree he couldn't see the forest.

Ambassador College started with only FOUR students. The three male students were Herman Hoeh (now Dr. Hoeh), Raymond Cole (now District Superintendent of the New York District), and my elder son Richard David. The second year there were added Raymond McNair (now Deputy Chancellor of Ambassador College in England, and Director over the Work in Britain), his brother Marion, and Kenneth Herrmann (now Registrar of Ambassador College, Pasadena campus). Perhaps my son Dick and Raymond Cole had been, like myself, too close to all the confusion in Oregon. But the others were free from that, and God was able to reveal clearly, through them, precisely what is His form of Church Government.⁹

Once clearly seen, it was put in operation. I had to repent of neglecting to assume the responsibility God had charged me with in Oregon. God's government is always government from the TOP - GOD the Father - on down. Christ is the living HEAD of this Church. There is authority in the Church. Troublemakers, bent on dividing and breaking up God's Church, are not tolerated. THERE IS NO DIVISION, but happy harmony and order, in LOVE!" (Herbert W Armstrong, "Personal From", *Good News*, August 1969, pp. 5-6.)

The Church seems to set up systems and accompanying policies to operate effectively in the particular time period and culture it exists within. In other words, the Church reflects the world in some way, good or bad. Centralising functions was good and fruitful. Unfortunately, some took this to extremes which Herbert Armstrong addressed by the late 1960s and early 1970s.

A Fair Chance of Salvation for all Mankind

The belief that mankind is not lost but most will yet be given a *fair chance* of salvation, was being explored by Sabbatarians and the Church of God folk even in those days, though it does not appear anywhere in Church of God (Seventh Day) theology. This is explained at length in the *History of the Fair Chance Doctrine* available online [here](#).

⁹ Rod Meredith fills in some details: "'Even after several years of guiding the college, Mr. Armstrong still did not understand much about Church Government, and said so openly a number of times. Consequently, in the early mid-1950's, Herman L. Hoeh and I each were inspired to write articles along this line. As hundreds of our older brethren remember, I wrote the article, *'Judging and Discipline in God's Church'* and, later, *'Whose Opinion Counts?'* and one or two other similar articles.'" (Letter promoting the *Church Government and Church Unity* booklet, 20 January 1993)

Nothing on this doctrine appears in Mr Armstrong's writings that we have until 1943. He somehow picked up on this belief and it first appeared in the article "Predestination. Does the Bible teach it?" *Plain Truth*, Nov-Dec 1943 (pp. 8-12). Although his early belief seems to indicate that this would occur during the Millennium rather than during the Last Great Day – the latter understanding came later, apparently by the early 1940s.¹⁰

In the aforementioned article he wrote the following of the separation of the sheep and goats parable:

"Notice, all those called and saved prior to Christ's second appearing on earth had been SEPARATED from the unsaved before Christ stood upon earth-while still in the clouds of the air -- before He sat upon the throne of His glory! The SEPARATION going on after He sits upon that throne ruling over THE NATIONS, therefore, is a different, and succeeding separation!

Here are earth's nations – earth's mortals--all nation's! And now begins a process of SEPARATION. It is according to the decisions they make, and the actions they take. Those who turn to a life of RIGHTEOUSNESS are set on the RIGHT hand. They are converted-given IMMORTALITY-because Christ says to them: "Inherit the Kingdom!"-and mortal flesh and blood cannot inherit that Kingdom! (I Cor. 15:50). Those who do evil then receive the full penalty of the law-DEATH! They are sentenced to depart into the lake of fire! Certainly this passage pictures nothing but a process of salvation going on, after Christ's return. **DURING His millennial "Sabbath Day."**

That is the great "FALL Harvest of Souls! ...

But, if one has been truly called of God, convicted by God's Spirit, his mind opened to the precious spiritual knowledge of the Truth, then if that man sins wil-fully, deliberately, intentionally, without resistance - **THAT MAN IS THROUGH!** He has had his chance! He shall have no other, **during the coming millennium!**

... our loved ones who have died unsaved in all probability did not die LOST! In all probability they were not called, during this age. But their call is coming later! They shall be resurrected back to life, and given their **fair chance!**" (pp. 10-11)

"Let us make our calling and final election sure. Let us not grieve over departed loved ones who probably were not called, in this life. God is able to raise them up again. **They will come up in the Great White Throne Judgment.** And in that judgment, the book of life shall be opened, and many shall then find it." (p. 12) [emphasis mine]

The above seems to show that Herbert Armstrong believed that the period of *fair chance* for all would occur during the Millennium, rather than after it; yet he also says that those not now called will arise in the Great White Throne Judgment. Perhaps he did not edit it properly from an earlier draft that contained his original stance on the subject? It is hard to ascertain at this time.

¹⁰ This article was reprinted under the same title (and it seems to possess almost the exact same wording) as a booklet in 1957 and again in 1973.

He even calls it *fair chance* as did many of the authors referred to previously. In addition, he uses the word *chance* on a number of occasions throughout the article.

Here is one tidbit of historic information that is helpful in attempting to track the development of this doctrine:

"The Conns and Bobbie Fisher cite a 1940s incident that they vividly recall. **Mr. Armstrong had at first thought that all of the dead would be resurrected during the Millennium.** A woman named Belle Rogers set Armstrong straight when she pointed out the scripture in Revelation 20 about the resurrection after the Millennium." (Richard C Nickels, 'Appendix C. Herbert W. Armstrong: 1892-1986' in *Early Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Giving & Sharing, 1996, p. 237) [emphasis mine]

Although others had an understanding of this concept in some way as explained in the article *History of the Fair Chance Doctrine*, Mr Armstrong certainly took this understanding to another level and after careful sifting and reflection, purified and deepened the doctrinal understanding that others had commenced research on.

Born Again Teaching

Although Mr Armstrong apparently took on board the Church of God's doctrine of two spiritual births based on John 3 (ie at conversion and at the resurrection), the emphasis was on the spiritual 'birth' at conversion.

It seems that he initially accepted the mainstream teaching on born again had not yet come to understand the process of born again, culminating in the resurrection., given his statements on the bottom of page 7 and top of page 8 of a letter to Mr Dillard, 2 Oct 1928.

Here is evidence of his acceptance of the teaching a little later:

"So what must we conclude? That which is born of the flesh IS FLESH, John 3:6. When fleshly, sinning, mortal man REPENTS and is BAPTIZED as a symbol of his FAITH in Christ, he RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT -- not as a result of "tarrying," but through FAITH (Galatians 3:14; John 7:37, 39). And this RECEIVING of the GIFT of the Holy Spirit is the baptism with the Spirit INTO the Church!

He is then a CHILD OF GOD. He has been typically BORN AGAIN -- **though the real re-birth must come at the time of the resurrection.** He is born from above -- born of the Spirit. And thus he is baptized BY the Spirit into the body of Christ!" ("Tongues. Is the Pentecost Experience Being Repeated Today?" *Plain Truth*, Nov 1934, p. 7) [emphasis mine]

Here he seems to subscribe to the traditional Church of God (Seventh Day) belief of that time – two parts to born again (conversion and resurrection).

But notice that in the June 1938 *The Bulletin of the Churches of God*, he makes a statement in the fourth paragraph that shows that he believed that one is born again now, and that seems to have been the emphasis in those days:

"We recognize that all born-again souls become members of the spiritual Body of Christ, the true CHURCH OF GOD."

Due to my research and interest in this matter, I decided to write in 1995 to Ralph Orr, a researcher in the Worldwide Church of God about all of this

"1. history of the former 'born again in the resurrection' doctrine...
I have found that this teaching may be traceable back to sabbatarians and Russellites last century and that it was believed by some about the 3rd century. Do you have knowledge of any papers or research undertaken into the history of the doctrine?
When exactly did HWA change it and could you possibly give me the exact reference?
Someone suggested that the Russelites etc from the last century may have obtained this idea from the Campbellites, but I have seen no proof yet. I also see nothing in Christadelphian material, although a Christadelphian friend assures me that it is believed by some of them..." (14 July 1995)

His response was:

"Rather than take the time to document my responses to your questions, I will simply state the few things that I am certain of based on my prior research into primary source material.
Mr. Armstrong's earliest writings clearly show he believed that one was born again on conversion. That he thought otherwise did not occur until after AC was established, perhaps not until about 1952-3. As to who might have taught prior to him that the born-again experience did not occur until the resurrection, I do not recall coming across any such information. I seriously doubt any Campbellite or Russellite influence in this area, or any Christadelphian." (e-mail to Craig White from Ralph Orr, 17 July 1995)

Here is what Herbert Armstrong himself wrote on the matter many years later:

"Among these [new truths] have been the TRUTH about the PURPOSE of human life - the fact that God is not merely one Person, or a "trinity," but the divine FAMILY or KINGDOM. **The truth that we are now only BEGOTTEN, and that being BORN AGAIN is to be actually BORN into that very FAMILY, as sons of God**, even as the living Jesus Christ is a divine Son of God. THAT Truth is BASIC- and I did not understand it until after the college was founded. I could "see" it, even up in Oregon, but was AFRAID to accept it - it seemed like "blasphemy" to assume we humans could become members of the DIVINE FAMILY that IS God! But finally I had to accept it, when faced

with the fact that it is taught throughout the New Testament!" ("Personal from the Editor," *The Good News*, August 1969, p. 6)

From this one can see how the born again doctrine developed as Mr Armstrong grew in understanding.

Pentecost Date

As many or most readers would know, Herbert W Armstrong and the Radio Church of God observed Pentecost on Sivan 6 until 1936.

In 1937 he switched to a Monday Pentecost. Several years later, in 1943, he explained the reasons for the Monday observance in "How to Figure Pentecost," *Good News Letter*, 8 June.

Ernest Martin presented a 93 page paper to the Church hierarchy advocating a Sunday Pentecost in 1961 but it was rejected. Apparently, he thereafter observed Pentecost on both Sunday and Monday each year. Finding a copy of that paper is proving elusive, so if anyone has it, please send my way.

By January 1974 the day of observance was changed to a Sunday with proofs provided by Raymond McNair to Mr Armstrong.

A collection of information on the Pentecost changes can be viewed [here](#).

Radio/Worldwide Church of God Pentecost observances

Years	Pentecost Day
1927 - 1936	Sivan 6
1937 - 1973	Monday
1974 on	Sunday

Three Angels Messages

Another doctrine held to was that of the *Three Angels Messages* sometimes called *The Third Angels Message* due to emphasis on the Mark of the Beast vs Sabbath observance.

Origin of the Doctrine

This doctrine centered around a warning message to the world and originated with the Millerites

"The Three Angels' Message," *Wikipedia* provides a good summary:

"The messages from the three angels are found in Revelation 14:6–12. They are placed directly in front of a scenario in which Jesus, referred to as "the Son of man," arrives on a "white cloud" in order to "harvest" the earth (Revelation 14:14–20)...

However, the prophecies of the three angels in Revelation 14 warn of a religious authority that will attempt to force people to worship human traditions just before He returns. The essence of humanity is at stake in this crisis: we are free-willing creatures who get to decide what and who to worship."

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Angels%27_Messages#:~:text=They%20are%20to%20call%20the,the%20mark%20of%20the%20beast 24 March 2024)

In effect these angels (whether spirit of human messengers inspired by three angels – believers in this doctrine are still debating that) convey a warning message to the world and especially concerning Sabbath observance.

In 1841, Gilbert Cranmer (1814-1903) accepted Miller's advent teachings. Cranmer also taught the Third Angels Message which was to proclaim that the protestants should repent, reject the Mark of the Beast and accept the entire Law of God, including the Sabbath. It is he who became known as the 'founder' and 'elder statesman' of the Church of God.

This doctrine was promulgated by the Church of God (Seventh Day) for decades and still is by Seventh Day Adventists and to a very limited degree, in the Churches of God.

Refer to Raoul Dederen, "The Three Angels in the Nineteenth Century," *Adventist Review*, 2 Oct 2020

<https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/2010-26/> for additional insights.



Another author who explains this is G. I. Butler in a series "Advent Experience" published in the *Seventh-day Adventist's Review and Herald*, 10 February, 1885, 17 February, 1885, 24 February, 1885, 3 March, 1885, 10 March, 1885, 17 March, 1885, 24 March, 1885, 31 March, 1885, 7 April 1885, 14 April, 1885. You can read the articles online here <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-advent-html/#Gradual%20Disappointment>

John Nevins Andrews, an early Seventh-day Adventist scholar, devoted an entire book on the subject *Three Angels of Revelation 14:6-12*.

To this day there are articles and websites dedicated to this by Seventh-day Adventists, but not as frequent or as intense as past generations.

Church of God (Seventh Day)

The doctrine entered the Church of God in the nineteenth century from the time of its reformation under Gilbert Cranmer and successors.

For example, the article "The Three Angels' Messages Of Revelation 14" by Elder J. R. Goodenough, Marion, Iowa, 1872, was reprinted in the *Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 21 May 1918, p. 371. Here are two more:

"And now a few words on the third message, Had not Babylon the great fallen, lost her power, there would have been little need of the third message, for the saints of God were being put to death." (A.M. Brinkerhoff, "The Second Angel's Message," *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*, 25 May 1875, p. 39)

"The third angel's message is going forth to all lands, heralded by the press and active ministry, God's faithful ambassadors, proclaiming truth in foreign lands as well as at home, giving the warning of the day of God, the pouring out of his wrath, unmixed with mercy upon the disobedient and ungodly, but offering mercy and pardon to those who heed the message and obey the commandments of God. ... The three angel messages have been giving light to the world." (J. T. Alverson, "The Three Angel's Messages," *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*, 10 May 1881, p. 48)

In the 1880s, Alonzo Trévier Jones wrote a series on the subject for the Seventh-day Adventists in their publications: *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 10 June to 1 July 1884; *The Signs of the Times* 2 March to 13 April 1888; and *Review and Herald Extra*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 27 January 1893, pp. 5-12.

In the early twentieth century Jones left the Adventists and aligned with Greenberry Rupert and associated with the Church of God.

One can search through the various Church of God periodicals from the nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century and a number of articles will come to light such as "The Three Angels Messages," *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 15 July 1913, pp. 568-69. And another on a warning ministry "God's Watchman," *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 3 June 1913, p. 471.

In 1936 an article appeared on the subject in the *Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*:

"Any person who understands the first angel's message knows positively that the fall of Babylon is coming quickly. ...

The second angel's message follows the first more naturally than fall follows summer. The hour of God's judgment is come.

The next thing in order is the fall of our modern civilization. Then what? The beast and his image, as sure as winter follows the fall, and night follows day. (M. Mackintosh, "The Three Angels' Messages," *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 3 Feb 1936, p. 10)

Andrew Dugger continued this belief and published a book that included the traditional Church of God position in his *Daniel and Revelation*, chapter 14.

This doctrine continued for decades. Robert Coulter, Church of God (Seventh Day) historian noted this in an article written in the *Bible Advocate*:

"As a teenager in the 1940s, I attended a Salem branch of the Church of God (Seventh Day). At that time the Church was preaching the imminent return of Jesus and the **third angel's message as a warning of impending judgment** upon worshippers of the beast (Revelation 14:9, 10).

Other elements of this teaching were that the Antichrist was preparing to enforce the "mark of the beast" upon the Christian world (13:11-16)." ("Joy of Our Advent Hope," *Bible Advocate*, Nov-Dec 2014, p. 8) [emphasis mine]

It is also mentioned in clauses 33-35 of the *Constitution of the Church of God (7th Day)* based at Salem, West Virginia which you can view online here www.churchofgod7thday.org/. This Constitution was approved in late 1933 with only very minor amendments since.

Enter Herbert W Armstrong

In 1931 Mr Armstrong was ordained an elder of the Church God (Seventh Day) (based in Stanberry, Missouri) by laying on of hands of the presbytery and members. He joined with the breakaway group based at Salem, West Virginia in 1933 and continued as an elder until his credentials were revoked in 1937 over two matters: holy day observance, and 'British-Israelism'.

The tradition in the 1920s and 1930s was for both elders and members together laying hands on the person being ordained. This occurred with Mr Armstrong at that time:

"It was decided by the officers of the Conference that on the next all-day meeting I was to be ordained. I shall never forget that moment of my ordination. The meeting was being held outdoors. I do not remember where--except it was in the general rural area of Jefferson. I do not remember other circumstances. But I do remember the ordination itself. It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences like being married, and being baptized. Only this seemed to me to be the most momentous event of my entire life. **All the brethren--as many as could get their hands through to my head--laid their hands on me--on my head, my shoulders,**

my chest and my back." (*Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong (1986 edition)*, pp. 426-427). [emphasis mine]

He maintained contact with them but relationships dimmed until finally, in 1945, most contact between them ceased. However, many newer members of the Radio Church of God visited with and attended the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the early 1950s until this ceased sometime that decade.

From the earliest days of Mr Armstrong's ministry, he had an intense interest in Bible prophecy. He believed that the system used by Satan over the centuries was a revival of the Roman Empire, known as the Holy Roman Empire. He strongly warned for years before World War II of the darkening war clouds on the horizon, singling out Hitler and Mussolini for special attention.

Prophecy is indeed a major portion of the Bible. J Barton Payne in his famous and authoritative *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* states that the Bible is 27% predictive, including types. But he does not include many of the types and 'hidden' prophetic messages. So, at least 33% of the Bible is prophecy. Payne lists Ezekiel as the most predictive book in the Bible with 821 verses devoted to the subject.

Returning to Mr Armstrong's interest in prophecy: He was not cognizant of the unique message contained within the book of Ezekiel for the end-time House of Israel at that time, but adhered to the Third Angels Message – the two bore similarities.

However, he did have a deep sense of a calling to be a witness and warning to the House of Israel – a sense of urgency.

So, Mr Armstrong entered into a Church that taught this Third Angels Message doctrine, but which struggled to get the message out or produce a strong warning to the world and it didn't take him long to realise that. He even wrote a manuscript which he titled *What is the Third Angel's Message?* advocating British-Israelism. The manuscript Armstrong wrote was more than 260 pages long (by the mid-1930s on into the 1980s it was re-titled *United States and Britain in Prophecy* with minor changes to the title along the way).

Church leader, Andrew Dugger even wrote to Mr Armstrong agreeing with these sentiments, but doing little about it:

"Our mission is progress with the Third Angel's Message to warn and to save"
(16 Aug 1928)

By February 1929 Andrew Dugger had received the manuscript's first few chapters. We are fortunate in that the original manuscript has survived but is kept under wraps by Grace Communion International. NB: the original pages of Armstrong's manuscript were discovered among uncatalogued papers of the Herbert W. Armstrong Papers collection

Dugger responded:

"I presume you think I am very neglectful of duty in not answering your letter before this, but it was a long while before your manuscript reached me on the Third Angel's Message.... **I feel that we are entering into a new era for the message and that it is going to take on new life.** In fact the time for the message is now here which I have long contended it would be when the events of the last few weeks came to pass." (26 Feb 1929. A photograph of this letter appears in Vol. 1 of the 1986 edition of the *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*) [emphasis mine]

Mr Armstrong read widely, including *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* by John Harden Allen¹¹ and he also read *The Destiny of Britain and America* by Lt. Col. Mackendrick whom he wrote to:

"I am writing you for two reasons: I am going to point out what I believe to be a slight error in your argument ... and I feel that a great message based on this Israel truth has been revealed to me which must be powerfully broadcasted to the whole world without delay." (*Letter from Herbert Armstrong to Mackendrick*, 4 March 1929).

At that time Mr Armstrong and the Church of God (Seventh Day) believed in the Three Angel's Message doctrine and it is clear that this doctrine was to be an avenue to warn the House of Israel – however, both he and that Church curtailed that teaching sometime later.

In effect the three angels message taught the following: The first angel spread the Gospel across the world "for the hour of his judgement has come." (Rev 14:6). The second angel concerns Babylon the great and has fallen because the nations of the earth are drunk on her fornications and suffer God's wrath.

The third angel's message which concerned Mr Armstrong was the mark of the beast – those who worship the beast and receive the mark will drink the cup of the wrath of God. It was important to Mr Armstrong that this warning should now go forth boldly. In fact, in 1928 he wrote the following in the Church of God's periodical:

"The Third Message is no more unpopular than were the First and the Second. And we are blessed with facilities for spreading the message which never were so much as dreamed of in the days of the First and Second Messages...

"Now let us look frankly to the results being achieved by those who claim to be carrying the Third and last Angel's Message. The prophecy says this Third Angel's Message shall go forth "with a LOUD shout." ...

"The average man and woman today is not aware of the fact the Message has been going forth ... Most folks, it is true, are passively aware that there has been some agitation over the Saturday-Sunday question. But the question has

¹¹ He referred to this book in a sermon series on Galatians in 1980.

not gotten actively into their consciousness." ("Have We Tarried for the Power to Carry the Third Angel's Message?" *Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 16 Oct 1928, pp. 432-33) [emphasis mine]

It seems that this Third Angel's Message doctrine laid the groundwork for the Ezekiel Message doctrine discussed further below.

"... the Adventists and the Church of God...Have either of these bodies been, so far, winning converts to the message by the thousands--by whole cities? **Has this message, so far, gone forth with the POWER, the BOLDNESS**, and the results in converts ...? ... It can't be because God is not doing His part ... Folks, let's come to life! Let's awake from this state of coma. Let's tear away from the inertia that holds us ... Perhaps we need MORE POWER!" (ibid, p. 433) [emphasis mine]

Herbert Armstrong continues this theme in a letter to a Mr Dailey 13 March 1929 where he discusses his manuscript – apparently *What is the Third Angel's Message?* (see p. 12 of the letter) and how two chapters were mailed to Andrew Dugger. He mentions the tribes of Israel, Jeremiah's Commission and the Sabbath Covenant Sign on page 10:

"I deliberately risked my personal standing and favor with the Church of God in order to make an effort to do, in the only way I knew how to do, what I regard as absolutely necessary if the Church of God is to rise to the tremendous demands of the present hour...
"I have become convinced that the Church of God is lacking, both in ability to present the Message in a manner that is convincing to all open-minded people, and in personal or rather, collective, power ... that SOMETHING IS WRONG!
The Church of God is not delivering this message with a LOUD SHOUT!" (p. 1) [emphasis mine]

He continues this theme:

"I am afraid the preachers and officials of the Church of God never get to hear some of the doubts and misgivings and expressions of lack of confidence that I already have heard... The Church of God has not been delivering this Message with even a faint semblance of a LOUD SHOUT." (p. 6)

Pages 7-8 outlines how the Church must get the public's attention to the message and they cannot seem to do it and then to move them to action.

"SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG! The Church of God is not delivering this Message as it should go!" (p. 8)

This is expounded on the following page which is rather insightful. He outlines how he is going to stir the leadership up, even if it means they will have nothing to do with him.

The final page is especially insightful:

"I am, frankly, trying to do MORE than merely present a little additional truth to the Third Angel's Message as the Church of God has it. ... I am trying to do more than that. I honestly feel that they must be AROUSED. They must come to receive a NEW VIEW of the whole Message ...
"... and I know believe the Lord has the power to bring it around.

I know it will be either that, **or He will raise up another people of some kind to SHOUT this Message to the world...**

"I am sending you the rest of the manuscript to study. You did not have an opportunity to go over the real connection between the Israel truth and the Third Angel's Message very thoroughly ... [help] me ... to get the Church of God to become AROUSED, and to START OUT ANEW, and to present the Message free from even the slightest error ...?" (p. 12) [emphasis mine]

Presumably this refers to the *Third Angel's Message* manuscript and subsequent warning message.

Dugger admitted that he believed in the British-Israel teaching a few months later:

"I am returning from the Arkansas conference... and have just finished the manuscript on the **Third Angel's Message and British Israel** ... You have put much work on this and I am impressed to write you now while the matter is fresh on my mind ... I have seen no work near its equal in clearness and completeness. You surely are right, and while I cannot use it in the paper at the present you may be sure that your labor has surely not been in vain ... **There is a purpose in your having gone into this matter so deeply ... and you will hear more from these truths and the light herein revealed later.**" (*Letter to Herbert W Armstrong*, 28 July 1929) [emphasis mine]

It is interesting that British-Israelism was linked to the Third Angels Message so early on in the research and writings of Mr Armstrong.

Mr Armstrong continued his campaign. In a letter to a man named Otto, he raised the issue again:

"... there is absolutely no purpose in organisation except to facilitate the carrying of the Gospel, and particularly now, in these last days, **the last WARNING MESSAGE phase of it to the world.**"

"One added thought. It seems to me that our first and paramount duty now, is to shout the WARNING of impending judgments, plagues, and the coming of Christ, as a WITNESS – not the converting of the world, but the sounding of the last WARNING. That should be our FIRST duty, and secondly, the conversion of as many souls as possible, and thirdly, after that, the bringing of people into our spiritual organisation ..." (14 Nov 1934) [emphasis mine]

This is the essence of the Third Angels Message which evolved into the Ezekiel Message.

Two years later he wrote to leading minister Clarence Dodd:

"I believe thoroughly we are, as a church, far ahead of all other denominations, and the only one close enough to the real essential truth to be truly God's Church." (p. 1)

"I feel that the radio is destined to be the LOUD VOICE ... with which the Third Angel's Message is to go..."

"I believe that when God's time is here, and He opens the way, that I can produce in the Plain Truth Magazine fully as attractive as the Adventists Sign of the Times, and even more interesting, and with real PUNCH, and INTEREST, and POWER ... I believe it will be preached over the air, and published by the printing press." (p. 2)

"I have fully believed, Bro. Dodd, that the Lord is going to make just such a broadcast as this possible. It cannot of course be financed in our Church. But God has ways of moving on men's minds and hearts, and in His own time, He will impress the proper ones to come forth with the means." (p. 2) (7 July 1936) [emphasis mine]

Then in a letter to Church of God leader, Andrew Dugger, Mr Armstrong iterated his position:

"I know God has called me to His ministry ... I know He has fitted me specially for the radio work ..." (p. 1)

"Brother Dugger, SOMETHING HAS BEEN WRONG with the Church of God. It has not GONE FORWARD with the P O W E R it should. Why? There is a REASON! ...

"WHY have we been declaring the Third Angel's Message with such a pitifully weak whisper? ...

"The Church of God IS AT THE CROSSROADS!" (p. 3)

"... I sent you the manuscript of a complete book I had written on the ISRAEL question then entitled **"The Third Angel's Message."** I believe (and which book, re-written, is now being published, incidentally), and I repeatedly wrote you asking "AM I RIGHT on this question ... [you replied] saying I surely WAS RIGHT, and that you say a purpose in the Lord revealing this truth to me at this time. Yet nothing was ever done with this truth..."

"This has become a Church stand, I believe, not merely your personal stand - - but I have become convinced from these several incidents that you have taken the stand that we must CLOSE THE DOOR to advancing light and truth, or to purging out any possible error in present teachings..."

"But the Church has come to a CRISIS, and its fate will be decided in about five weeks ... So I beg of you - - I plead with you, IN JESUS NAME, for the sake of the Church, for the sake of the souls, for your own person sake, will you not now COME OUT BOLDLY WITH THE STAND THAT THE CHURCH WILL KEEP THE DOORS OPEN TO ADVANCING LIGHT AND TRUTH?"

He then goes on to say that they are holding to a policy "of the CLOSED DOOR." (p. 4) (11 April 1937) [emphasis mine]

From Third Angels Message to Ezekiel's Warning Message

Here is Mr Armstrong's own account of how he was later awakened by God to the incredible Ezekiel Message (which is based on the Captivity Doctrine):

In the January 1962 *Plain Truth* in installment 41 of "The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong" he writes under the sub-heading "New Consciousness of Mission" (pp. 12-13). A consciousness which developed about May 1941:

"About this time God impressed on our mind His real meaning of the prophecies in Ezekiel 33:1-19, and 3:17-21. The true significance of the entire Book of Ezekiel had been revealed for some time. But now, suddenly it took on *immediate*, and *specific* and *personal* significance.

"I had seen that Ezekiel was a prophet with a message for the future. He himself was in the captivity of the House of Judah ... But he was not sent a prophet with a message to these people at all ...

"Ezekiel was made a prophet to [the House of Israel] ... His message was a warning of invasion and total destruction of the nation's cities. That invasion was for the future. That prophecy came more than 120 years after Israel already had been invaded and conquered ..."

Note that the emphasis was on national invasion of the House of Israel and mass destruction of their civilization. This is the crux of the matter – here is the heart and core of the Message.

"So now I saw Ezekiel was set a watchman – to watch international conditions as well as God's prophecies – and when this invasion is preparing, and near, shortly prior to Christ's coming to rule the world, he is to warn the people who had migrated, in Ezekiel's day, to northwestern Europe and the British Isles! But Ezekiel never carried that warning! It was not for his time! He was used primarily to *WRITE IT*! It now became plain to me that God was to use a modern 20th-century "Ezekiel" to shout this warning ..."

Mr Armstrong continues:

"I had no illusions that I was chosen to be the "modern Ezekiel" to proclaim this message. But I did know that no one was sounding this alarm. I did plainly see this sword of destruction and punishment coming. I knew the time was near. Perhaps, with World War II well under way, it was even then upon us. We could not, then, foresee that God would grant another recess period in the series of world wars before the final round to end at "Armageddon".

"And I did see plainly, that God said: "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned" that God would require the blood of the people – and now *whole peoples* - at the watchman's hand!

"That was a stern warning to *me*. At least I was *one* of the watchmen who *did*

see it coming! God had already placed the broadcasting facilities of three radio stations at my disposal."

The above account of how the Ezekiel Message doctrine came to Mr Armstrong provides us with a fascinating insight into the historical background to this doctrine and exactly what it is: a warning to the House of Israel of impending invasion and doom with the Church's function today being not unlike that of the prophets of old – railing against Israel for sin and warning of punishment via invading armies.

It was similar to the Three Angels message in that both:

- were for the last days;
- were warning messages;
- contained urgings to repent;
- and were to be powerful enough to possibly shake nations to their senses.

Mr Armstrong's use of the term "Ezekiel's Message" was not to refer to the entire message of the book, but a particular feature or aspect of it – specifically warnings of soon-coming invasions (with consequent slavery by invading hostile enemy armies) bent on wiping out the House of Israel.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, for a short period in 1973 and again from about 1979-82, Ezekiel's Message became the 'right arm' of the Worldwide Church of God's mission and message, (in addition to proclaiming of the Good News of the Kingdom of God). Please note: the Ezekiel Message is not (in fact never has been) a replacement for the True Gospel. During this end-time it is a tool to warn our peoples, wake up the nation and bring the repentant into the Church of God. Here they can securely practice their religion and keep God's Laws and ways in accordance with the repeated efforts of the prophets to Israel to repent and turn to God's Law.

"Warning of Third Angel

Soon, now, the time is coming when gross spiritual darkness will cover this earth -- when no human will be permitted to preach Christ's true Gospel. We must work while it is day -- the night is fast drawing on when no man can work for God.

At that time God shall send angels with His final warning to these apostate nations under sway of this great deceiving church as a final witness against them. Three such angel messages are foretold in Revelation 14. Notice the final warning of the third angel:

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his MARK in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" -- the seven last plagues, full force, unmixed with mercy (Rev. 14:9-10)! ...

There it is! In verses 9- 11 of this chapter the **third angel warns** that those who have the mark of the beast shall be punished by the plagues of God. In the next verse, the 12th, the saints who do not have the mark are those who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD. Those who have the mark, therefore, are those who refuse to keep the commandments of God. The MARK of the beast, therefore, involves a rejection of the COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, or of one of them, for if we break one we are guilty of all (James 2: 10).

So, one class of people accepts the MARK of the beast.
The other class keeps the commandments of God." (*The Mark of the Beast*, 1952, pp. 8-9. See also Herbert W Armstrong, "Why the Seven Last Plagues," *Plain Truth*, July-Aug 1955, p. 16)

Mr Armstrong was unrelenting with the truth, and so should we be.

A booklet by the Living Church of God hints at it:

"Near the time when the Church's organized proclamation of the gospel is shut down, the Two Witnesses will boldly deliver God's message, and will die in Jerusalem. Yes, there will still remain a message to be delivered to the world in the waning days of Satan's rule! That is why John is told, after the sixth trumpet has been blown and just before the seventh trumpet sounds (Revelation 10:7), that there yet remains a message to be delivered to nations and rulers. The Two Witnesses, who "prophesy" (Revelation 11:3) and "finish their testimony" (v. 7), **along with three angels whom God dispatches** after the sounding of the seventh trumpet (14:6-9), all "prophesy again" after John receives the "little book" from the mighty angel." (John Ogwyn, *Revelation: The Mystery Unveiled*, p. 32)

So, the belief in the 'Third Angel's Message' still lingers around the Churches of God, but somewhat diminished. It is currently replaced, in part, by the Warning Ministry and Captivity of Israel doctrines. The latter is also known as 'Ezekiel's Message' as we have seen. Refer to the article *Just What do you Mean 'Ezekiel's Message'?* for further clarification concerning this teaching.

Pyramidology

Some are aware that Mr Armstrong held to some sort of belief that the Great Pyramid of Giza could hold secrets to God's plan and the future based on its design during his early years.¹²

Having been in contact with the British-Israel World Federation in the mid-late 1970s, I had read some materials on the subject, but they were unconvincing.¹³ In 1979, in a shop that sold excess books I picked up a copy of Charles Piazzi Smyth's book *The Great Pyramid. Its Secrets and Mysteries Revealed* but similarly, I also found it unconvincing.

¹² The history of pyramidology and the influence of John Taylor can be found in the article "Pyramidology," *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramidology#:~:text=Metrological%20pyramidology%20dates%20to%20the,mathe%20matical%20instruments%20of%20the%20day>.

¹³ The British-Israel World Federation has its critics of this doctrine, for example Neil Curtis and Abeer Eladany, "Pyramidology and Radiocarbon: The Dating and Interpretation of a Fragment of Wood from the Great Pyramid," *The Comité international pour l'égyptologie (CIPEG) Journal*, Vol. 4, 2022, pp. 75-82.

Via the grapevine I had heard about Mr Armstrong's initial interest in the theory but that he had later rejected it. I also found it of interest that some members in England and Australia in the late 1970s seemed to subscribed to the theory, though in a low-level way.

So when I read Ralph Orr's 3-page article *Herbert W Armstrong and the Great Pyramid* around 2009, it came as no surprise, but at least someone had attempted to document this interesting aspect of Worldwide Church of God history. The documentation includes letters Mr Armstrong wrote in 1927.

However, he did not explore where this belief was mentioned elsewhere in the literature and how it was:

1. Never a doctrine of the Church
2. Belief in it was eschewed around the late 1950s

In *The Bulletin of The Churches of God in Oregon*, June 1938, Mr Armstrong makes reference to the theory:

"On Sunday night, June 12th, **an illustrated lecture on the Great Pyramid was given at Eugene Church** by Evangelist B. P. Kallor of Los Angeles. The church was packed, with several unable to find seats. Radio listeners came from more than fifty miles. The Radio-Church quartette sang two of their beautiful anthems.

The editor is booked for a speaking tour through Washington and British Columbia during the last of July and fore part of August, speaking at a number of points including Tacoma and Bellingham, Washington, and Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. He will attend **the convention of the Anglo-Israel federation** at Vancouver, where he will be one of the speakers. An attendance of 2500 to 3000 is expected. He will be accompanied by Mrs. Armstrong, and Beverly, who will sing." [emphasis mine]

Mr Armstrong visited the Great Pyramid (*Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong*, Vol 2, pp. 336-37). Also a photograph with him and Mrs Armstrong with the Great Pyramid in the background inserted between pages 246 and 247).

He mentions this visit in a *Coworker Letter* and in it reveals that he still seemed to believe in some sort of pyramidology, but apparently rejected it soon thereafter:

"Mrs. Armstrong and I will meet our son Dick and George Meeker tomorrow, and after only one day in London, we will fly to Cairo, Egypt. There, we will visit and examine closely the Great Pyramid, the largest and most marvelous building on earth! Many believe the Great Pyramid was divinely inspired and designed — that it contains prophecies for us — that it accurately gives dates of history of the world right up until the time of the end! The Pyramid does reveal marvels of mathematics and science, including the size of the earth —

its exact shape and weight, and its distance from the sun — the precise length of the year to the minute, the tilt of the earth's axis and the period of its revolution.

The pyramid, like the Bible, has been MISUNDERSTOOD! It is apparently FILLED with important messages which have been misinterpreted so far! It may contain a divine message for man-kind. IF it is to be revealed to ANYONE at this time — IT WILL BE REVEALED TO US! God gives His Spirit — and reveals new truth — to them that OBEY Him! (Acts 5:32)." (*Coworker Letter*, 15 April 1956) [emphasis mine]

Herman Hoeh wrote an article on "Who Built the Great Pyramid"? *Plain Truth*, May 1964 in which he wrote how the theory was not at all provable or correct:

"Was the pyramid built to make the Bible clear and understandable? Are the speculations of the pyramidologists true?

And what about the "pyramid inch" — is it really equal to a year in prophecy as some assume? Can chronology be accurately determined only by the pyramid? Here are the surprising answers!...

But not all is perfect workmanship. Human imperfection is noticeable in the rough, unfinished masonry on the floor of one of the chambers. We found the floor of the "King's" chamber flagrantly out of level. All this speaks of remarkable HUMAN WORKMANSHIP — but does it speak of a divine revelation, as pyramidologists theorize? If this mighty architectural wonder is a divine revelation, where is the divine perfection?...

Some pyramidologists try to date the pyramid by astronomy. They assume that when built, the North Pole star, Alpha Draconis, could be seen from the entrance passage of the Great Pyramid. But the idea is purely an assumption. There is no proof!

Furthermore, the North Pole star would have been visible for only a few minutes from the descending passage BECAUSE THE PASSAGE NEVER DID POINT DIRECTLY TO THE NORTH POLE STAR! Some adherents of the "British Israel World Federation" would try to deny this, but any history book demonstrates the idea false." (pp. 43, 44)¹⁴

Years later Mr Armstrong still had a residual interest in the Pyramid but obviously had long eschewed the pyramidology aspect of it. To him the Great Pyramid was:

"the greatest building on the earth (and it remained the greatest building and the tallest and highest building on earth until the building of the Woolworth Tower in New York); and that building was the Great Pyramid in Egypt. I've been in it. I've been all through it, and through its chambers — the king's chamber, the queen's chamber, and the tunnels, and so on." (*The Plan of God* sermon, 25 Sept 1980)

¹⁴ It should be noted that by the early 1970s, Herman Hoeh no longer held to the view that Pharaoh Cheops was the Biblical Job.

Refer to the **Appendix. The Great Pyramid** for additional quotes from sermons by Armstrong on the Pyramid.

Making a big issue of this is unnecessary as Mr Armstrong didn't. There is no evidence that he regarded it as essential; mention of it was negligible and it was never documented as a doctrine at any time. Rather, it seems to have been an interest of his.¹⁵

Mr Orr does not mention this or the 1930s and 1950s references per the above.

The Godhead

What view did Mr Armstrong hold on the nature of God (ie composition of the Godhead) in the late 1920s and into the 1930s?

Was it a unitarian/Arian view of most of the Church of God in those days; or the minority Socianist or Adoptionist view that Christ had no pre-existence; binitarianism which a few probably subscribed to; or one of the 18 or so trinitarian 'formulas'?

In 2006 I sent an e-mail to Church of God historian Richard Nickels in 2006 I mentioned that:

"... HWA may have been a trinitarian in the 1930s while he was still growing in knowledge ... I know he was a writer for 'Messenger of Truth' who's editor was a trinitarian. But was HWA?" (5 January 2006)

He had noticed the same thing but did not make an issue of it, but did affirm that this was the case.

It might seem a bit strange that an elder with the Church of God (Seventh Day) subscribed to the trinity when the majority of them were Arian. But in those days, different views on the composition of the Godhead was not made a test of faith, although they may have been frowned upon.¹⁶

I wrote the following e-mail to a contact in 2013 concerning *The Messenger of Truth*:

"I first saw it in 1977 or 1978 [in my youth :)] when Richard Nickels sent me a bunch of materials called "Early Literature of the Worldwide Church of God" - much of it was incorporated into a book some years later [by Nickels], but not this item which I subsequently scanned.

I note[d] that the editor of 'The Messenger of Truth' was a trinitarian. At that time some of the Church of God (7th day) and associated groups had

¹⁵ It was also of interest to a few in the Church of God (Seventh Day). See for instance the article by A. D. Rust, "The Great Egyptian Pyramid," *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, 1 April 1919, pp. 229-31.

¹⁶ Church of God pioneer, Greenberry G. Rupert, also held to the trinity at one stage, but hardly mentioned it in his writings.

trinitarian believers; some were unitarian [Arian]; some [few] were binitarian; and I think a very few were Socianists." (31 January 2013)

So, the first time I noticed this possible trinitarian link was around 1977 but I attributed it to Mr Taylor who was editor of *The Messenger of Truth* assuming that Mr Armstrong was initially Arian along with the majority of ministers and members. My thinking was that he came to believe in binitarianism by the late 1930s or early 1940s.

Here is the actual quote from "Fundamentals of Belief," *The Messenger of Truth*. Vol 1, No 1, Sept, p. 6:

"We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: a personal God of supreme mind, power, knowledge and authority, who created the Heavens and the Earth and all that in them is."

Mr Armstrong wrote an explanation about *The Messenger of Truth* in his series "The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong," *The Plain Truth*, Vol 24, No 12, December 1959:

"As the meetings continued, Mr. Taylor proposed to get out "a paper." I told him then of my vision of someday beginning publication of a magazine to be called "The PLAIN TRUTH." As early as 1928 I had prepared "dummy" copies of this envisioned magazine. I had even had a professional letter-artist design a front cover.

But this was really Mr. Taylor's magazine--or "paper," as he called it. He accepted part of my plans, by incorporating the word "TRUTH" into its name. He named it "The Messenger of Truth." Since I had had so many years' experience in newspaper and magazine work, he delegated to me the work of designing the mast-head, and the make-up. It had to be a paper of very few pages. Lack of funds dictated that. I designed it as a small, 8-page magazine. Since we could not afford a special cover, the lead article began on the front cover ...

"I might mention here that, so far as I know, only two issues of this "paper" of Mr. Taylor's ever were published. As a publishing enterprise, it was a "dud." He decided that the reason 50,000 or more subscriptions did not come in spontaneously as a result of the first issue was because it contained nothing about the Sabbath. **This first issue came out about September 1, which I believe was after the close of our tent campaign. We prepared it during the last weeks of the campaign. I had left Eugene, and had no part in the second edition.** It was devoted heavily to the Sabbath. The response was less than that from the first issue. When this did not bring in the subscription money, a few years later Mr. Taylor got out an issue of a "paper"—he may have still called it "The Messenger of Truth" devoted primarily to arguments against God's Sabbath!" (p. 11) [emphasis mine]

For some reason this explanation did not appear in the various book editions of his *Autobiography*.

Years later, after reading *The Messenger of Truth*, I wrote to researcher Ralph Orr in 1995:

"Dear Mr Orr,

I have 2 other matters which | trust you could provide me with pointers toward research...

2. I would like to know when HWA switched his ideas on the Godhead and also what exactly were HWA's beliefs concerning the nature of the composition of the Godhead prior to his adoption of binitarianism and the God Family concept.

Some tell me that he was unitarian [Arian] until the early 1960s. But | am sure he may have been unitarian in the early 1930s and switched to a binitarian position in the early 1940s or thereabout.

I note the inference to the trinity in the *Messenger of Truth*, vol 1, no 1, Sept 1931, page 6. But | am sure that this would have been the beliefs of Robert Taylor, editor. HWA was the associate editor and seems unitarian by all accounts." (14 July 1995)

He responded three days later:

"As to Mr. Armstrong's trinitarianism, the statement of beliefs in *The Messenger of Truth* is very telling. That publication was put out by the Christian Publishing Association. Only two people were a part of that association -- Mr. Taylor and Mr. Armstrong. **The statement of beliefs says "We" not "I" believe in the Trinity.**

A survey of Mr. Armstrong's early articles and correspondance never discusses any differences that he had with Christianity as a whole over the nature of God. He assumes the Holy roe they had and taught about was the same Spirit he had. He seems to have been perfectly comfortable working with trinitarians and with Church of God (Seventh Day) Arians -- who taught Jesus was not eternal but created. Whatever he believed, he seemed not to think it important enough to emphasize or cause division.

As was the case with the born-again doctrine, so it appears with the Trinity. He did not take a decidedly anti-trinitarian stance until after AC was founded. He never embraced the Church of God (Seventh Day) idea that Jesus was a created being. But he came to believe that the trinitarian doctrine was problematic. (Actually it was the level of scholarship of evangelicals in the 1940s that made it problematic.) Upon closer examination | am convinced that HWA thought of himself as a monotheist and that God was a trinity minus one. That made him, by the early 1950s a binitarian. Unfortunately, he used language that implied bitheism, and was so understood by a large percentage of the church." (e-mail from Ralph Orr, 17 July 1995) [emphasis mine]

Evidence for this trinitarian belief can be found in very early writings of Mr Armstrong:

"Since man is not fallen, but has ever continued to progress upward, MAN NEVER HAD ANY NEED OF A SAVIOUR! Thus does evolution dispose of the great proof-of Jesus Christ, - the Son of God, - **the second member of the Trinity.**" ("Can a Sabbath-Keeper Believe in Evolution?" *Bible Advocate*, 1 May 1928, p. 275) [emphasis mine]

In a letter to a Mr Dillard he wrote about how he comes into new truth is revealed on page 6 and bottom of page 8 – via "... THE HOLY SPIRIT, Who promised to guide us into ALL truth ..." (letter, 2 Oct 1928, p. 8). Here the holy spirit is personified.

And in 1934 he wrote:

"The Holy Spirit was not yet given." How could men receive the GIFT before the GIFT had been GIVEN? The SPIRIT could not come until Jesus had been glorified. Speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told His disciples, on the eve of His crucifixion: "If I go not away, the Comforter WILL NOT COME unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you. And **WHEN he** is come," etc., John 16:7-8.

The Holy Spirit had not yet been given! It had not yet come from heaven! Unless Jesus went to heaven, and was glorified, it could not come!

Again, that same memorable night, Jesus said: "**He dwelleth** WITH you, and shall be IN you," John 14:17. He was WITH them, in the person of Jesus, but He was, after the day of Pentecost, to be IN them, through the Holy Spirit! And so, today, as the Scriptures say, "Christ IN us, the hope of glory."

What happened upon the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29) -- the advent of the OTHER Comforter, the Holy Spirit to earth FROM HEAVEN, as Peter clearly and plainly explained on that very day, Acts 2:16-21.

And it was upon that day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, eleven days after Jesus had ascended to heaven to be glorified, that the Holy Spirit, the "other Comforter," came from heaven!"...

"What is TRUTH? Jesus said, "THY WORD is Truth!" The BIBLE! So, when **He, the Spirit of Truth** is come, and He guides us into the TRUTH, He merely guides us into a RIGHT understanding of the BIBLE! The BIBLE, and the Bible ALONE, is the test."

"Because the "other Comforter" had not yet come FROM HEAVEN -- from "on high." And Jesus knew **that WHEN He came, He would** come first to the city of Jerusalem. And so Jesus was merely instructing His disciples to wait, or remain, in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost, when, it had been ordained, the Holy Spirit was to come from heaven -- "from on high" -- to earth." ("Tongues. Is the Pentecost Experience Being Repeated Today?" *Plain Truth*, Nov 1934, pp. 3, 4, 5) [emphasis mine]

The above demonstrates that he viewed the holy spirit as a personage and thus third member of the trinity.

It seems that he eschewed the trinity by the mid-1930s and not in the 1950s as Mr Orr suggests. There is no shred of evidence in any letter, newsletter or periodical that Mr Armstrong wrote in the 1930s or 1940s indicating that he continued the belief in some form of trinity. In fact, he hardly ever mentioned the doctrine of the Godhead at all, with the exception of writing to Mr Andrew Dugger in the mid-1930s that he held to all of these points. The understanding of the Godhead was Arian in those days.

The above is most certainly not trinitarian.

Notice what he wrote to elder Dodd:

"Just today received back the manuscript on the Holydays ...
Well, Brother Dodd, I am more that heartsick over the way matters are shaping in the church at large ... we must remain in and do all we can to save the Church and purge it of these evils ...
"I have never gone contrary to the 40 points [of doctrine]." (letter, 6 July 1937, p. 1) [emphasis mine]

Four months later he wrote to elder Alexander:

"Before I accepted my lot as one of the seventy, I had the assurances from members of the Twelve that ministers were to be left FREE in their belief OUTSIDE of **the 40 points**. I accepted my credentials with that understanding. I HAVE BROKEN NO AGREEMENT!" (p. 2) (ie 1934/35) [emphasis mine]

The *40 points* to which he refers are listed in the 1933 Constitution of the Church of God (Seventh Day) based at Salem, West Virginia of which Andrew Dugger was the *Overseer* or leader. Note what it stated concerning the Godhead:

- "2. The Eternal One in Heaven, is the Creator of the heaven, the earth, the sea and all that is therein.
3. That Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, conceived by the power of God, born of the Virgin Mary, and is our Lord, Christ, and Redeemer.
4. That Jesus proved His Messiahship by remaining in the tomb exactly "three days and three nights," rising in the end of the weekly Sabbath.
5. That the Holy Spirit is the Comforter which abides in the believer and is manifest by power, and the fruit of the Spirit." (clauses 2-5).

There is certainly nothing trinitarian about that.

Concluding Remarks

It is clear from all the evidence presented herein and what can be gleaned from the Radio Church of God's literature of the period 1930-40s, Mr Armstrong's beliefs/doctrines were being consolidated, expanded and deepened.

For me, it is both intriguing and encouraging to see the advancement in understanding and the clarity he brought to the various doctrines.

This writer read about Mr Armstrong's views on these and much more in the mid-1970s and I found the history of doctrinal development intriguing, not offensive. Most members don't know and don't care. Many realise that Mr Armstrong was undergoing a steep learning curve. As did they when they came into the truth.

One has only to look at the many problems and issues of Protestant leaders over the centuries and compare their errors and behaviours with that of the Church of God to see the great divide between their behaviours and those of our leaders. So why the condemnation of the Church of God by its critics?

These doctrines and truths were consolidated at different speeds and different times. But consolidated they were and presented to the Church of God and to the world via publications and broadcasts.

It wasn't only the literature of the Churches of God that he explored, but also the writings of Charles Taze Russell, the Seventh-day Adventists, Ethelbert Bullinger and probably Greenberry Rupert.

Over time he changed on this or that such as the structure of Church administration; day for observing Pentecost; or the Mosaic Law – his view back then that the sacrificial system and rituals were 'nailed to the cross.' By the 1950s this was no longer the view given that they have a spiritual aspect to them and will be revived during the Millennium.

The Church, however, probably considered the sacrifices to have continued in a spiritual sense and that they will be revived during the millennial reign of the Messiah. For example:

"Notice it! The Levites shall never lack a man — "want a man" in the archaic wording of the King James Version — to present offerings continually. There will always be Levites available to do the job — or God's promise is not true. The Levites have been punished — there is now no temple or tabernacle whereupon to present their offerings, but they have never lacked a man who could perform the rituals whenever they might be required.

In Ezekiel we find that after Christ's return the Levites will still be available to perform the physical duties of the priesthood as a reminder of Israel's failure

as a nation to do God's will (Ezekiel 40.46; 43.19; and 44.9-21). **The very statutes which were perpetually, established upon the priesthood in Moses' day are still binding during the millennium upon the Levites (Eze 44.17-25).** When God declares a statute everlasting, HE MEANS IT! Read these verses for yourself." (Herman L Hoeh in "Are God's Festivals to be Observed Forever?" *The Good News*, March 1959, p. 6) [emphasis mine]

"And then, **beginning chapter 40, the remainder of the Book of Ezekiel reveals the ideal THEOCRACY — God's NEW ORDER of divine government upon earth** — the permanent forms and institutions which shall express the ideal relation between God and man!" (Herbert W Armstrong in "Will Russia Attack America?" *Plain Truth*, July 1956, p. 19) [emphasis mine]

I may go more into this and other doctrines in a future edition to this article.

Also, you will find the occasional exuberance for God and below is one example:

"True, they spoke with other tongues when the Holy Spirit first came upon the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). And in telling the Apostles of it, Peter said "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning," and "God gave them the like gift as He did unto us," Acts 11:15, 17. And that same GIFT is for you and me today! **Praise God for that!**" ("Tongues. Is the Pentecost Experience Being Repeated Today?" *The Plain Truth*, Nov 1934, p. 2) [emphasis mine]

We don't see much of that anymore, in a balanced way.

He could see the value of the research of non-Church of God authors and even quoted from John Wesley in the *Plain Truth*:

"Admonitions of John Wesley

Beware that daughter of pride, Enthusiasm! Give no place to a heated imagination.

Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams¹⁷, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from Him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil.

Love is the highest gift of God; humble, gentle, patient love. All visions, dreams, or manifestations whatever, are little things compared to LOVE. If you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way!" ("Tongues. Is the Pentecost Experience Being Repeated Today?" *The Plain Truth*, Nov 1934, p. 8)¹⁸

¹⁷ However, his wife did have a dream which he referred to in *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, 1973 edition, pp. 187, 193-94. Loma Armstrong wrote to her mother about this dream in a letter November 1917.

¹⁸ See Eccl 5:3, 7: "For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words ... For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear."

Mr Armstrong was learning and growing – let us acknowledge and accept that. By the time of his death 16 January 1986 (6 Shebat on the calculated Hebrew calendar), he left behind a tremendous legacy and assemblage of truths for us to be grateful for.

And not to be just grateful for, but to continue, protect and expand upon.

Appendix. Which is the One True Church of God?

"WHICH is the One TRUE CHURCH Of GOD?" *The Bulletin of the Churches of God*, 2 June 1938, by Herbert W Armstrong.

Is there an organization, with a definite form of church government, recognized by Almighty God exclusively as HIS one and only CHURCH? Many organizations on earth lay claim to being God's one and ONLY true Church.

Which is right?

We must remember, too, that members of each of these various organizations are entirely sincere and honest in believing earnestly that their particular group is the one true Church. All, too, feel absolutely certain that this belief is sustained in THE BIBLE.

Many Roman Catholics, for instance, are so positively convinced that they belong to the one and only true Church, that their minds are CLOSED to any proof to the contrary. Thus they are blinded! We can see this. But are some of US in this same condition of blinded prejudice?

IF we belong to the one and only true Church, then open-minded, honest, fair, unbiased examination of the FACTS will only confirm the truth. But if we have been deceived, had we not better accept the Bible as a source of CORRECTION and REPROOF (II Timothy 3:16), so we may become UNdeceived? Remember, a deceived man believes sincerely he is right. Surely we cannot be too careful.

The Source of AUTHORITY

The one source of authority on this question is the Bible. In it we find the only record of the founding of the true Church of God.

First, let us not assume. Let us ask, just what IS "the Church"? Is the Church a BUILDING? Is it an ORGANIZATION?

Whatever it may be, we know it is something that was purchased with the blood of the Son of God. Acts 20:28 tells us: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (shepherds, or local church elders), to feed the CHURCH OF GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

Recently we heard a minister say over the radio that the Church is the BUILDING in which the people assemble for worship. This text ought to remove any doubt on that point. God did not purchase any building, or buildings, with His blood!

Another thing we learn from this text is that it was not some "church" named after a man, but "The Church of GOD" which Christ purchased. And, since we believe our readers are all sufficiently familiar with the many texts in the Bible proving the true Church should be called, as God Himself named it, "The CHURCH OF GOD," further proof on this point is not here necessary.

The Scriptures teach us that people - individual PEOPLE - not buildings or organizations as such - have forgiveness of sins thru His blood. We are justified, cleansed of all sin, by His blood. Therefore, since the CHURCH OF GOD is that which was purchased with His blood, and since it is individual souls, not collective organizations, which His blood justifies and cleanses, we must

conclude that THE CHURCH OF GOD is composed of these PEOPLE whose sins are thus forgiven, and who are thus cleansed.

Did Christ's Blood Purchase Some ORGANIZATION?

The next question is, was it some particular group of people who have joined some particular ORGANIZATION, organized under a certain form, having a certain form of government (which means RULE), with certain men occupying certain offices, doing the ruling, which Christ purchased, to the exclusion of other organizations or individual people, with His own blood?

Can we believe that there is on earth today some one ORGANIZATION, whose members ALONE Christ purchased with His own blood, and that people who belong to some other organization, or no organization, who have fully repented, accepted Christ, been baptized, and received the Holy Spirit are excluded, and without salvation?

The Scriptures distinctly teach that the CHURCH OF GOD is the Body of Jesus Christ, of which He, and HE ALONE, is the HEAD!

Notice Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand ... and gave HIM to be HEAD over all things to the Church, which is HIS BODY, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

It should be evident to all not unduly prejudiced that the true CHURCH is not a human governed and administered organization, but a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM!

It is A BODY! And that body is not a group of people who have organized themselves together, whose names are written with material ink on a man-kept book or a membership card - it is THE BODY OF CHRIST!

Jesus pictured this spiritual organism in John 15:5, when He said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The branches are joined, not to each other directly, but each is separately and individually joined TO THE VINE. It is only the Vine that joins one branch to another.

The life-giving sap flows from the grapevine into and thru the branches, so they bear fruit, just as the Holy Spirit flows from Christ into and thru each member of HIS BODY, producing the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, GENTLENESS, etc.

Read a little farther (Eph. 5:25-27): "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water BY THE WORD, that He might present it to Himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be HOLY, and WITHOUT BLEMISH."

It ought to be apparent that God's Son did not give Himself for a building to present it to Him - neither did He give Himself exclusively for some ONE of the many sectarian denominations or organizations, whose members EXCLUSIVELY He is going to present to Himself a glorious organization. No such organization is without spot or wrinkle. None is entirely HOLY. There are at least a FEW Judas Iscariots within all of them! And if just ONE MEMBER of the TRUE CHURCH has a spot or wrinkle, then the whole body is not without spot or wrinkle. The TRUE CHURCH that shall be presented to Christ will consist only of those individuals who are HOLY, and without spot or wrinkle.

Are we, then, to conclude that God is dispensing salvation WHOLESALE, by ORGANIZATIONS, instead of by individuals? Is there some one organization which, with its one or more Judases,

will be presented to Christ and go into the Kingdom, while all other people outside this particular organization, regardless of how much they have repented and believed, no matter how holy, cannot hope to be presented to Christ and to enter the Kingdom with eternal life?

The SPIRITUAL ORGANISM

Notice Ephesians 5:30: "For we are members of" - what? Members of an ORGANIZATION? No, "members of HIS BODY." Note it! The true Church is THE BODY of Christ. A body has head, hands, feet, etc. The head directs the actions of every other part of the body. "Who [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature And He is the HEAD of the body, the Church." (Colossians 1:15-18).

Oh, brethren, can we not see it? God is A SPIRIT - invisible, immortal! (John 4:24). Man is but FLESH (Genesis 6:3; John 3:6). Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom (I Corinthians 15:50) - we must be BORN AGAIN - born of God, who is a SPIRIT - born of THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 3:3). The Bible way to be BORN AGAIN, and to become a spirit being is - what? To join an organization? To cast your lot with this one true organization? To take your stand for the doctrines our organization has voted upon? No! The conditions are "REPENT, and BE BAPTISED (in FAITH) in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST ... and ye SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" (Acts 2:38). IF you have the Holy Spirit you are CHRIST'S, but if the Holy Spirit is not dwelling and abiding IN YOU, then you are NONE OF HIS (Romans 8:9), and certainly not OF His body, no matter how many organizations you have joined!

How, then, does one get INTO the true CHURCH OF GOD, which is THE BODY OF CHRIST? Does he JOIN it, like one joins a lodge or a worldly club or society? Brethren, there is not a single text in the Bible that speaks of JOINING THE CHURCH! Rather, "God adds to the Church SUCH AS MIGHT BE SAVED!" (Acts 2:47). Ministers have no doubt written out membership certificates to many who ARE NOT SAVED! Many have accepted an ARGUMENT - many have accepted so-called "Church of God doctrine," - many are resting and attending church on the Sabbath - who have never been truly CONVERTED - who have never really DIED and been BORN AGAIN, and who do not have THE HOLY SPIRIT! It is only those being SAVED - who have THE HOLY SPIRIT - whom GOD adds to His true CHURCH. Men may add others to their organizations, but GOD only adds those being SAVED to HIS CHURCH!

How does God put us into the true CHURCH OF GOD? "By one SPIRIT are we all baptised [put into] into ONE BODY," (I Corinthians 12:13). Not by joining it. Not by some preacher writing out a membership certificate! Not by "casting your lot," or "taking your stand." And note it! There is but just the ONE BODY!

Oh, dear brethren, can't we see the blessed TRUTH? We must first receive the HOLY SPIRIT - and that by utter, complete, SURRENDER to God, full and genuine REPENTANCE - by a real BORN AGAIN EXPERIENCE - by BEING CONVERTED - CHANGED! If we are led by the Holy Spirit, rather than by men, then and then ONLY are we the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

Christ is GOD'S SON. God is A SPIRIT. And when we receive THE SPIRIT of adoption, and are BORN OF GOD, then we, too, become the SONS OF GOD. And GOD'S SONS are combined together, not by a man-formed organization, but by HIS SPIRIT, into ONE BODY! Now Christ is not the body. He is only a part of the body - He is THE HEAD! He is THE FIRSTBORN among many brethren - the first of the Sons of God. The other sons form the rest of the BODY. The rest of us are the toes,

fingers, arms, legs, etc. CHRIST IS OUR HEAD! We must go as HE directs! And THIS is the BODY OF CHRIST, the true CHURCH OF GOD!

And therefore the true Church of God is a BODY - ONE body - composed of the SONS of God, who are BORN of Him thru the HOLY SPIRIT. And the Scriptures tell us explicitly that there is BUT ONE BODY - but ONE true Church of God. IF that one true Church is only an organization with government administered by men in authority over other men, then whatever organization is the true body is composed wholly of saved, born-again sons of God, and no one outside this man-ruled organization can have salvation.

But if, on the other hand, the true Church is that spiritual organism composed of all, regardless of what organization they are in or whether in ANY organization, who have been converted, and are being led of the SPIRIT OF GOD, as individuals no matter WHERE they are - then THIS is the ONE AND ONLY true Church of God, and any organization who lays claim to being the true Church is only another body - and one different from the TRUE CHURCH OF GOD.

If the TRUE CHURCH is made up of saved individuals, regardless of WHERE they are, then THAT is the one true Church - that and not any organization. And the Scriptures do clearly teach this. Therefore NO ORGANIZATION on earth, as they now exist, can Scripturally lay claim to being the ONE TRUE CHURCH! It makes no difference whether it be the Roman Catholic, or some other organization!

But is not the Church organized? Should it be organized? That is not the question of this article. The point is, the Church is NOT an ORGANIZATION. So far as organization goes, there are MANY organizations - MANY sects and denominations. And that which binds each one together, is also the very thing which separates it from others, and has caused all separation and division. This we shall discuss in a future article.

Suffice it to say here that there are SEVERAL organizations who go under the name CHURCH OF GOD.

There are several organizations who have for their main doctrinal tenet THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

There are also a number who claim to have the BIBLE FORM of organization, and even have APOSTLES. But not one of those things or all of them stamp an ORGANIZATION as the one true Church - because the Scriptures warn us against FALSE APOSTLES (II Corinthians 11:13-15) identifying them as the ones who work deceitfully, and with pretense and hypocrisy - and also because the one true Church IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION.

We know - and YOU know - there are many, not members of any sect, denomination, or organization, who have been truly converted and have the Holy Spirit, and, being the CHILDREN OF GOD, they are MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR OF THE ONE BODY (I Corinthians 12:27). You know this is true. There are, beyond any doubt, MANY other people who are connected with VARIOUS organizations, who, while they may not have all the knowledge, as yet, nevertheless have truly repented, received the Holy Spirit, and been born into the true family of God. They are not members of YOUR organization, but can you deny they are members of THE ONE TRUE CHURCH? DARE you deny it?

We know, too, that in EVERY organization there are SOME who do not have the Holy Spirit - who never were truly converted, or have backslidden. And these are NOT in the one TRUE Church!

God alone knows the hearts of men. He alone knows WHO, and just HOW MANY, are in His one and only TRUE Church of God. Praise God, that TRUE CHURCH is not limited to some one

sectarian denomination! Praise God salvation does not come by the permission of men in some man-governed organization - it is a FREE salvation - open to ALL.

What a glorious TRUTH! The TRUE Church is NOT AN ORGANIZATION - it is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM. Brother, Sister, are YOU a member in good standing?"

Appendix. The Great Pyramid

Mr Armstrong mentioned the Great Pyramid from time-to-time. For instance in the *Did God Create a Devil?* booklet he wrote"

"The book of Job shows God talking with Job about the creation. God is saying to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" There is the implication here that Job had directed the building of some very great edifice - such as the great pyramid of Giza in Egypt. Job was righteous and somewhat proud of his accomplishments. God was whittling him down to humility by a comparison of accomplishments" (*Did God Create a Devil?* p. 6)

Below are sermons wherein Mr Armstrong mentions the Great Pyramid of Giza. There are probably more sermons where it is referenced and possibly articles too.

Sermon, 16 May 1981 - How you and I came to be here.

Let me read you a little of that, in Job the 38th chapter, where Job had just created the greatest building on earth — the great **pyramid**. Job was the master craftsman that hired all of the men and supervised the building of the great **pyramid**. He did it for a pharaoh of Egypt. He was not a pharaoh. He was not an Egyptian at all. But he was a very great man, and he was a very self-righteous man; and finally God was speaking to him and sort of whittling him down to size because he was very self-righteous.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said [to Job] ...

Job 38:4 Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Job had laid the foundations of the greatest building on earth, but God (Jesus) had laid the foundations of the ENTIRE EARTH! - The One who became the God of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew, it was called Yahweh. It is here called "the LORD."

Job 38:4 Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof [of the earth]fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof?

Now the only building on earth where the cornerstone is the top capstone (the last stone to be laid) is the great **pyramid**. And, actually, that top capstone never was laid. It isn't there. But on the earth it was laid (but not on the great **pyramid**). "Where were you when I laid the cornerstone thereof?"

Sermon, 13 Oct 1981 - The meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now we read, in the thirty-eighth chapter of the book of Job, where Job was a very self-righteous man but a very successful and a very wealthy man. Job had built the greatest building on the face of the earth, the Great **Pyramid** of Giza — the Great **Pyramid** of Giza in Egypt. Not very many know that. He was not the emperor of Egypt. The emperor had had Job do it for him. Job was merely the one who designed and supervised the construction and the building, and doing it for the Pharaoh.

But Job was self-righteous; and God had allowed Satan to take everything from Job, and everything finally except his own life. Job still didn't quite see the truth. He could not see that he was self-righteous. You know, that is the most difficult thing in the world — for anyone who is self-righteous to see it. He can't see it in himself.

You know, a sinner cannot ever have salvation until he realizes he is a sinner and will be willing to repent and change to a different way of life; and he needs to know what sin is. It is a way of life. It is the transgression of God's Law, and God's Law is a way of life. It's the way we ought to live; and it's the way of love, the way of out-flowing love: Love to God. Love to neighbor. It's the way that will bring peace. That will bring happiness and joy and every satisfying thing. It's a way of living. It's a practical thing, and people don't seem to be able to see that. I never could understand why they can't, but they can't. They're blinded.

Job 38:1, 4 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, [verse 4] (4) Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.

"Now you built this great **pyramid** — the biggest, the greatest, building on earth. I BUILT THE WHOLE EARTH! WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I DID THAT? I DID SOMETHING MUCH GREATER THAN YOU DID, JOB!" HE'S NOW WHITTILING JOB DOWN TO SIZE. JOB WAS TOO BIG. They used to have an expression, "to big for his own britches." I guess that would apply to Job. I guess that's the way he was. Then God continued about the creation of the earth.

Herbert W Armstrong's 50th the Feast.

You turn over here to Job...and Job had just created, or had directed the building of, a very great building. It was a building where the cornerstone was on top, the last stone to be laid. And that's...the only kind of building that is made like that is a **pyramid**. So undoubtedly Job is the one who the Pharaoh of Egypt hired to come and build the great **pyramid** for him. Now...

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,...

...and in verse five, and the thirty-eighth chapter now I am, of Job...Job thirty-eight...

Job 38:4 "Where was thou..." [Job] "...when I laid the foundations of the earth?..."

You created a building, you built the great **pyramid**, but I built the earth. Now, how big do you think you are compared to me? Where were you when I built the earth?

Sermon 20 Sept 1980 - The meaning of Atonement.

I went up to the top of the Woolworth Tower in New York in 1920 even. It's the, uh, the Empire State Building wasn't built yet in 1920, but the Woolworth Tower, down just off of Wall Street, was already there. And I thought it was something to go up to the top of that. That was the first building that had ever been built higher than the Great **Pyramid**.

And Job designed and built the Great **Pyramid** for the Pharaoh of Egypt. He was not a Pharaoh of Egypt. He was just someone the Pharaoh employed to do it, but he was a very great man and he had built that building and he thought he was pretty good. And, of course, he had his own righteousness that he maintained.

So God continued. He had created the earth. He says: "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened [the foundations of the earth, "I created the earth," God says]? Or who laid the cornerstone, thereof?" (Job 38:6)

Of the whole earth! He laid the cornerstone of the building, at the top. Now look, this is talking about a building where the cornerstone was the last stone laid. Usually a cornerstone is laid in the foundation before the superstructure is ever built, before the building rises up. This is speaking of a building where the cornerstone was the last building laid — the last stone, I mean, laid. And as a matter of fact, apparently, that cornerstone was never laid on this particular building, which was the Great **Pyramid**, in 1920 even. How do I know? I just read it to you. Do you believe it? "Well I don't know if I believe that."

Sermon 19 April 1981 – Challenged.

Job 38:1,4 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said...(4) Where [were you Job] when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Job had just built a great building. He had just built the great **pyramid**, as a matter of fact. The only building where the cornerstone is the top capstone and that's mentioned here.

Job 38:6-7 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened or who laid the cornerstone thereof? [which had been the top and the last stone laid] (7) when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Now on the great **pyramid** the top cornerstone never was laid, but on the earth it was. And all the stars of God, there again stars, like I said yesterday, are a symbol for angels. And all of the holy angels shouted for joy. Now God had created angels first. Angels were already there when He created the earth, but He not only created the earth, He created the heavens and the earth and you'll read further where He created the entire universe at the same time.

Sermon 18 May 1974 – Bricket Wood Sermon.

In the Hebrew language, it is plural; In other words, the whole universe. It was a perfect Creation. The Hebrew words indicate a perfect Creation. In Job 38:1-7, God is speaking to Job. He says, "Where were you, Job, when I created the Earth?" Job had apparently built a great building. He'd been the one who'd been building it. It was a building where the cornerstone was laid on last. Now there's only one kind of a building where that happens; and that is in a **pyramid**, where the cornerstone is the top stone. And this was one where the builders rejected that Stone [Matthew 21:42], and that Stone was Christ.

Apparently, Job then...there's some indication that he well could have been the builder of the Great **Pyramid**. Now, not that he was Khufu. He was not the Pharaoh of Egypt at all. But he could have been the great engineer that the Pharaoh brought in to do it for him. Anyway, God was showing how He created the Earth.

Sermon 25 Sept 1980 - The Plan of God.

Now Job had built a GREAT BUILDING, the greatest building on the earth (and it remained the greatest building and the tallest and highest building on earth until the building of the Woolworth Tower in New York); and that building was the Great **Pyramid** in Egypt. I've been in it. I've been all through it, and through its chambers — the king's chamber, the queen's chamber, and the tunnels, and so on.

Job was not the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh of Egypt hired Job to plan it, and design it, and build it. So we say that the Pharaoh built the Great **Pyramid**. Well, maybe you can say I built the campus in Pasadena; but I employed architects, and we employed contractors to do the work. I didn't do the work. I had something to do with the planning of the campus and our auditorium. I designed ... It was my idea to have the great pillars rising up seven stories high of the auditorium, out of an artificial lake. That was my idea, and the architects went along with it. And they are the largest firm of architects in the world. They have built some of the highest skyscrapers, not only in Los Angeles but other cities all over the world, even over in the Middle East in some of the oil rich countries. They are a very large company of architects and engineers.

But Job had built a building. Let me show you something more about it: So God is talking to him in the language of one who is familiar with building.

Sermon 17 April 1982 – Accreditation.

Now that reminds me of what He said to Job in the thirty-eighth chapter of Job. Job had just laid the foundation of the great **pyramid**, the greatest building on the face of the earth, and He says, "Where were you, Job when I laid the foundations of the earth? (Job 38:4 paraphrased) Well look here, here it says:

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands [God created all things by Jesus Christ — Ephesians 3:9]: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as does a garment;" (Hebrews 1:10-11)

Sermon May 1981 – He that Overcometh.

Now if we turn over to Job, the thirty-eighth chapter, and verse one. Now here was a very great man, he had built a very great building. As a matter of fact, the building he built was the great **pyramid** of Giza. I have been in it. I have been all around it. It was amazing even yet today — the greatest building on earth. It was the tallest building on earth, until the Woolworth tower in New York was built. I think you may have a higher building right here in Sydney today, but it was there was no such building until recent years in this 20th century.

Our Calling 10 Oct 1976 - Our Calling.

Job had just built (I think) the Great **Pyramid** — some great building. And it's a building where the cornerstone was the last stone laid on top (that's the only kind of building I know where that could be). So, He's whittling Job down to size. He says, "You created that building. I created the whole earth. "Where were you?"

Appendix. Extracts from *All About Water Baptism* by Herbert W Armstrong

The reason for quoting the below is two-fold: (1) to counter the idea that anyone can counsel and baptize whomever they wish without authorization; (2) to show that Mr Armstrong was not as extreme as some made out. He is clearly showing here that members should be used in the Work.

"Must Baptism Be Administered Only by Ordained Ministers?"

Finally, who is authorized to administer baptism?

Must the repentant believer be baptized only by an ordained minister? How much depends upon the goodness, or belief, or spirituality of the man who performs the ordinance?

First, let us look to the example of Jesus; next, to the instructions of Christ; and then, to the teaching and practice in the early New Testament Church.

Was Jesus Himself an "ordained minister"— that is, ordained and approved by one of the popular denominations around Him? No, He was despised and rejected of them — opposed, persecuted, belittled as a non-conformist. And He baptized more disciples than John. Even John was not recognized, ordained, or sponsored in any way by any popular group or church. He was in their sight a rank outsider.

Actually, as pointed out earlier, Jesus Himself immersed no one with His own physical hands — His disciples did it for Him, by His authority. And right there is the point which answers the whole question. The one qualified to do the immersing must always perform it in the name of Jesus Christ — which means by His authority, acting for Christ as His disciple.

The principle is that it is Christ who is baptizing you. The man who puts you under the water is merely performing this physical act for Christ, in His stead. You are not to look to the human man, further than to conscientiously try to go to one you honestly feel is a man of God, called of Christ, and used of Him in the work of His true Church. And if later he turns the wrong way, your salvation does not depend on that man or any other mortal man, but solely upon Christ! There is no cause to be baptized again by another man.

Always there is the chance that you may be deceived in the man you believe qualified to act for Christ in the act of baptism. If it depended upon this man, you would have to have divine powers of reading minds and hearts to be sure. You might have to be immersed fifty times before you could be absolutely sure of the man who did it — and even then, you could be mistaken. Just be as careful as you can, as God gives you to see, in the man who acts for Christ in baptizing you — and then do not look at the man — look at Christ — consider that it is Christ who is baptizing you, by and through a human instrument. And even if the instrument turns out to be imperfect, remember all humans are imperfect, and it was done for, and in the name of the only One who ever was perfect. And since it was in reality done by Christ, it should never be done over by another.

Who Should Baptize?

Now back to the example of Christ. In His own earthly ministry, He had this immersing performed for Him by His disciples. At that time they were not even converted — had not yet received the Holy Spirit — for the Holy Spirit was not yet given (John 7:39) because Jesus had not yet ascended to heaven to send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7), which first came to enter within and convert these disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Peter was their leader, and even after this baptizing, Peter denied Jesus three times. If you had been baptized by Peter in Christ's name, would you, on learning of his denial of Jesus, be baptized over again?

These men, who baptized for Jesus when He was with them in person, were not ordained ministers — were not recognized by any popular church — were merely students of Jesus at the time, being taught, not yet prepared to be sent out as His apostles and His ministers. And the indications are they were young men, perhaps not yet old enough to be made preachers or evangelists. They were not perfect, not even converted (Luke 22:32).

Consider now Christ's teaching. Those who go forth teaching, or preaching, His Gospel (most popular denominations preach a different gospel) are the ones He commanded and commissioned to do the baptizing (Matt. 28:19-20).

Consider the example of the inspired early Church. Philip was not an apostle, or a regular minister, but merely a deacon commissioned by the Church only to perform physical acts, such as waiting on tables (Acts 6:2-5). Yet he went down to Samaria and preached Christ and His Kingdom, and the people who believed were baptized (Acts 8:5-6, 12). The text does not even state that Philip did the baptizing — he may have had some of his new converts do it.

If you study the New Testament on the point, you will see it does not appear to attach great importance as to which man puts the believer under the water, since it is considered by the one baptized that Christ does it. The Holy Spirit sent Philip later to baptize the eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

However, **notice that the one performing the baptism ceremony was a representative (though not necessarily an ordained minister)** of the true Church of God in every New Testament case. This was the Church Jesus founded (Matthew 16:18).” (pp. 22-25) [emphasis mine]

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