

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD

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Dear members and co-workers in Christ,

About a month or two before the Feast of Tabernacles, Helen Amos (the wife of the late John Amos, the one minister who was with me at the founding of the Philadelphia Church of God) spoke to me about a Bible study she had in her files. It was a study, probably given by her husband on July 8, 1983, to the widows in the Pasadena area. Mr. Armstrong was still very much alive at that time. She showed me her notes, and they contained something unusual that I hadn't thought about much.

These notes said, "There have not always been **apostles**, prophets and evangelists in God's Church, but there have always been bishops and teachers in the Church. Titus and Timothy were evangelists. Evangelists are not assigned to be responsible for a single congregation, as were bishops or elders. Evangelists are responsible for ordaining bishops and organizing churches." And here is the statement that really struck me: "Evangelists are ordained *only* by **apostles**, and sent where **apostles** deemed it necessary. ... Consequently at a time when there is no **apostle**, evangelists would disappear as well eventually."

Now I've never thought about that before, but I believe it has the ring of truth to it. Again, Mr. Armstrong was alive and very much in charge at that time, and I'm sure he was aware of this teaching.

These notes continued, "Timothy was ordained by Paul (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; Titus 1:5), and assigned by Paul to Crete. When there is an **apostle** sent by Christ, the Church begins to flourish. He ordains and begins to use evangelists, and evangelists raise up local churches that come as a result of the **apostle**, and to have other responsibilities in education, and so on. When an **apostle** dies, no more evangelists are ordained. Local churches no longer have the unity of the overall control of the **apostle**. Over a period of time local churches declined with only local bishops. And with no **apostle** to assign bishops, the second generation begins to take bishops for granted, especially when he grew up among them." That has happened repeatedly through history—and we have even experienced it firsthand.

"Then when Christ sends another apostle a new Church era begins." Did the Laodicean era begin when Mr. Amos and I were fired from the Worldwide Church of God?

Several of those statements I'd never read before or taught before, and I found them intriguing.

In the Old Testament, the leading ministers were the prophets. But in the New Testament they were the **apostles**. After Christ came, the government structure changed. The Holy Spirit was given, and there were men raising up Spirit-begotten churches. So it was a different structure of government than in the Old Testament. The same truth was taught, but they could teach it with a spiritual depth they couldn't most of the time in the Old Testament.

In *Who Is 'That Prophet'?*, I quoted this statement from Mr. Armstrong, which he wrote in the *Tomorrow's World* magazine of February 1972: "Emphatically I am NOT a prophet, in the sense of one to whom God speaks specially and directly, revealing personally a future event to happen or new truth, or new and special instruction direct from God—separate from, and apart from what is contained in the Bible. And I never have claimed to be."

You can see there is a big change from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Mr. Armstrong never received a vision or anything like that where he taught it to the Church. He said it didn't happen that way, but it did a *lot* in the Old Testament.

"*There is no such human prophet living today!*" he continued. "The Bible is the written Word of God—and, for our time now, it is COMPLETE! *Never have I believed or claimed that God reveals to me new truths not contained in the Bible—in addition to, or apart from the Bible. ...*

"Let's take a look at the Church of God of the first century, as we find it revealed in the book of Acts, beginning from the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. The Bible was not fully written—only the Old Testament—in A.D. 31. God then was still communicating new truth, instruction and knowledge directly and personally to prophets. *As the Church progressed, it was the function of a prophet to communicate TO THE APOSTLES special messages which God had personally revealed to them.* Others were inspired in the writing of the books of the New Testament.

"So we read, in Acts 11:28 and 21:10-11, of the prophet Agabus. *But today we have the COMPLETE Word of God, for our time, in the Bible. There are no such prophets—EXCEPT FALSE ONES*" (emphasis mine).

Then in the *That Prophet* booklet I wrote, "I agree completely with this quote. Mr. Armstrong was not a prophet *in the sense that God spoke to him like He did with the prophets of old.* God spoke to Mr. Armstrong THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE. Mr. Armstrong was careful to make this distinction when discussing his office. Why? Probably because of the office he knew he was fulfilling. He, and just about everyone in the Church shortly before his death, believed he had fulfilled the end-time office of Elijah THE PROPHET (Malachi 4:5). The mere fact that he was an **apostle**, *the highest rank God gives to a human being today*, means he also held the office of prophet—and every other office below the rank of **apostle**.

"When Mr. Armstrong said he was not a prophet *like those of old*, he meant that he did not communicate with God like they did—in visions mostly. He communicated with God through the pages of the Bible. God gave him an abundance of new revelation—making the hidden truths of the Bible plain before all.

"God has worked with me in the same way. He has not spoken to me directly in vision. But He has given me all kinds of new revelation *from the Bible*—new revelation that you can prove. You can easily prove this fact from *Malachi's Message* and most of the booklets I have written."

Clearly there is a different role for the prophets in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the New Testament, though, you would have to say that prophets (that is, those who were *just* prophets, but did not also hold the office of **apostle**) had a much more confined role. Then after the Bible was canonized, the work of the prophets even grew less and less.

Where is there any evidence of a great or even a sizeable work of a prophet in the New Testament? (Again, not one who was also an **apostle**, like Mr. Armstrong, who fulfilled the end-time role of Elijah the prophet.) There is the work under "*that prophet*." But is it possible that is also a prophetic work being done under an **apostle**? We have to look at the scriptures, and we have to look at the FRUITS of what we have done in this Work. Are those the fruits of a prophet? Or are they the fruits of an **apostle**?

I'm not at all eager to get into this subject; I never have been. But God is, I believe, giving us more understanding.

The voice

John the Baptist called himself “the voice”—“I am THE VOICE of one crying in the wilderness ...” (John 1:23). There is no other like it. It’s THE VOICE—the one and only voice—that people of the world ought to be listening to, but are not.

John was quoting Isaiah 40, which says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. THE VOICE of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (verses 1-3).

This describes the work of John in the first century, but as we have taught so often, it goes on to be a *type* of what Mr. Armstrong did in the end time. Verse 4 says, “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.” That is obviously talking about the Second Coming. Mr. Armstrong correctly said that he was THE VOICE crying out to this world before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The passage continues, “And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. THE VOICE said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (verses 5-8).

Then verse 9, in the Hebrew, reads, “O thou, that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou, that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” This is a commission to deliver a message to Zion—God’s Church—and to Jerusalem—or the people of Israel. We know that *this* voice actually applies to *us*—to this Work today—to a man speaking out to this world and supported by the members of the Philadelphia Church of God.

So here is something I haven’t seen specifically before. If you look at this and examine what it’s saying, John the Baptist was *also* a type of *our* work. He was a type of Mr. Armstrong’s work, but he was also a type of *our* work.

Mr. Armstrong was an **apostle**. So if there’s someone doing the work of “the voice” again, is it possible that this man, *too*, is an **apostle**? Here, they are both working on the same level, essentially doing the same job, except that we must warn most of God’s Church as well.

Mr. Armstrong restored all things (Matthew 17:11). Then we came along and had to *re-restore* all things.

“The voice” in Isaiah 40 is actually in two parts, or two eras, if you look at it closely. There was the voice of Mr. Armstrong, and then *our* voice crying out to God’s sinning Church and the world. **If the voice preceding ours was an apostle, is it logical—we just want the truth of God, that’s all—that the voice following him would also be an apostle?**

The voice really has cried out in many ways, on television and magazines and booklets. If you check the list of the booklets I have written with new revelation, you have one small book and 41 booklets with *new* revelation from God. The voice is crying out today.

Jesus Christ is about to return to this Earth! **Isn’t it logical to think God would have another *apostle* crying out to this world before the greatest event to ever occur in the universe?**

Now, I am absolutely convinced that in God’s Kingdom we will be working for Mr. Armstrong, and I’m not saying anything contrary to that, but I am looking at these scriptures to understand them to the best of my ability.

Offices

There have been a few people from the beginning of the Philadelphia Church of God who have said to me from time to time, “I think your office *is* an apostle.” I never believed that because I didn’t see it in the Scriptures, and I wasn’t really anxious to even look into it. But we are here to search out God’s truth, and we can’t *resist* what God leads us to do. That would be suicidal.

Strong’s says an **apostle** is a person who is officially commissioned by Jesus Christ, a messenger. The most common definition is one who is sent—sent by God to do something. *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* defines it as one sent with a special message or commission. The *Companion Bible* says he is one sent forth with a special mission.

Here are a couple more comments in those notes from the WCG Bible study. “The laying on of hands is not required of an **apostle** or a prophet. They are chosen by God without using human instruments.” That’s *not* true of the other offices. We do lay hands on ministers when we ordain them. “But only Christ can ordain a prophet or an **apostle**,” the notes read. I believe that is true.

“When a man is chosen by Jesus Christ and God the Father to be an **apostle**, that man does not assume the office because he considers himself able to fulfill his duties, or because [in] his own opinion he possesses gifts that would qualify him,” these notes say. “He does not assume the office because he is the nominee of any group or Church officials or because he is chosen by any group who recognize his qualifications.” I certainly agree with that. “An **apostle** must be called by Jesus Christ without the intervention of man, and although his recognition by others does take place due to evidence other than his own assertions, his authority does not depend upon that recognition.” That is a true and profound statement.

Prophets in the New Testament usually have a rather confined work that God wants them to do. As Mr. Armstrong said, in the first century they brought messages to the **apostles**.

Ephesians 2:19-20 say, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the **apostles** and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” The foundation is the **apostles** and the prophets—the prophets in the Old Testament, the **apostles** in the New Testament, primarily. Jesus Christ is the chief Cornerstone.

Ephesians 3:1-5 show that the Spirit of God gives revelation to **apostles** and prophets, not to those of lesser rank. Then they are to deliver that message.

Ephesians 4:11-13 reveal Church government structure: “And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” That’s quite a standard: God wants to *perfect* the saints, to bring them into the *unity of the faith*, where we’re *all united* behind Christ and whomever Christ is using.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (verse 14). This has happened in this age! Ninety-five percent of the Laodiceans have been *shamefully* tossed to and fro! They had *all* that knowledge from God’s **apostle**—but look where they are today. They don’t know where they are spiritually at all, and they ought to know!

It is serious business when God GIVES MEN to help us be perfected and unified in the faith. We must make sure we know who they are and how God is using them. If we fail here, Satan will destroy us spiritually.

Christ wants us to grow up to the stature of Christ. He wants this body to be *fitly joined together*, just like the head and the body of a human being (verses 15-16). That is some deep unity! God gives us these gifts—that is, the ministers—to bring us into that unity so we don't do what the Laodiceans have done. If you look at the Church overall, we have a *mountainous* climb to surmount that problem. And it really gets back to Ephesians 4: People are being tossed to and fro because they weren't united behind Christ as Mr. Armstrong taught us to be. People weren't perfected, and they hadn't even come *close* as a church overall to reaching the stature of Jesus Christ!

So here's the point: If Christ has established an office, we'd better be aware of it, and we'd better be in sync with it as long as that person is following Christ.

The lawgiver

Genesis 49 is a prophecy about “the last days” (verse 1). Verse 10 reads, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a LAWGIVER from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” The scepter shall not depart from Judah. It means that Christ, salvation, and a royal lineage were to come through Judah. In those crown jewels of the British throne there is a scepter, even today.

But along with that scepter and those amazing promises of God, there is a LAWGIVER. This is a man who actually lays down the law about those scepter promises! That doesn't necessarily sound like a prophet. A prophet would warn about *breaking* the law, and that probably would be his main warning just before the people fell. But this man is a lawgiver the way Mr. Armstrong was a lawgiver, and I think that would be in the category of an **apostle**. This is in the context of God's vision to all the world about the scepter.

If you think about it, this scripture not only tells you that there is a lawgiver here in this last era that leads right up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, but it tells you really that God had to give the law *again*. Why did somebody have to come and give it if Mr. Armstrong gave it? Well, the church turned away from it, so God had to have *another lawgiver from the descendants of Judah* to give the law again. God is extremely organized in structuring the office of an **apostle**.

As we'll see later, Eliakim was “a father” to the house of Judah (Isaiah 22:21). We have a message to deliver to the Jews about the scepter and what it means to Judah! And we have a lot to say to Ephraim (the UK) about David's throne and a monarch sitting on that throne today. But to accompany that message, you need THE LAW that is given as well, or you'll get into serious trouble. God's people have built the house of God in Manasseh (the U.S.). And we came *out* of Britain, and it's had that throne for a long time. All of these three nations ought to know about the scepter promises and about the throne of David, but they choose not to know it today.

Something really special is going on in those three nations.

If you have a lawgiver, you must have a government to administer and teach that law. All I did was get it from Mr. Armstrong, but I had to pick it up after it had been cast to the ground and then go back and give it again. And you supported me in doing that.

Look at what God has given this Work in such a short time! We are few in number, but we are the nobles of God, following the government that implements the law, and that is why God can accomplish so much. But time is running out. And I think we may have a far greater impact. We certainly won't be the *size* of Mr. Armstrong's work, but I believe our message *will* have a greater impact on this world because of the times we are living in.

The Jerusalem dig is related to the scepter promise and the law. It's all connected to the throne in Britain and God's house in America.

Genesis 49:10 says that this lawgiver will not depart from Judah's feet until Shiloh come. Does that indicate that this man, this lawgiver, will be alive when Christ comes? I don't know, but it *could* indicate that.

In the New Testament, Christ started the Work with 12 **apostles**. They will have foundational roles in new Jerusalem—they have an *amazing* job ahead of them. Why? Because they—like David—really *loved God's law!* And they loved having it taught to them, and they didn't fight against it! Look what God will give them in new Jerusalem! Those 12 **apostles** whom Christ worked with were so carnal, but look at the future they have!

As I said, Mr. Armstrong was a lawgiver. He restored all things, including the law. But because human beings didn't want to submit to the law, we had to come along and, in a sense, *restore it again*. That was the first of those 18 restored truths that Mr. Armstrong listed, and it's the biggest stumbling block for most people. Just look at this world to see what happens when you reject God's authority. People who don't love the law and don't want direction from God just follow their human nature into depravity. God is trying to teach us because He doesn't want us to wreck our lives and to suffer the painful tragedies of sin. He wants to be our Father and He does believe in discipline, so He has a certain structure of government where He *does* that.

We ministers have to work continually to try to administer God's government, and to do it, as the Bible repeatedly tells us, IN LOVE. If we abuse that government, that will cause serious problems. And if we *fail* to implement it, that too will cause serious problems. So we **MUST** do it, whether we want to or not. God says we must do it—so we *must* find that balance. God will show us how if we let Him.

Eliakim

Does the work of Eliakim, described in Isaiah 22, sound like a prophet, or more like an **apostle**?

Verse 17 shows that this is all associated with captivity. Those who follow Shebna and that way of life are going to go into captivity, and God's very elect are going to go to a place of safety. This is *more* than just the work of a prophet today, when you think about all that's going on here and all that we will be doing.

In verse 20, God says, "I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah," or you could say "the son of Mr. Armstrong." And if he was an apostle, well, would Eliakim be?

"And I will clothe him with thy [Shebna's] robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle [those are the priestly garments], and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of [spiritual] Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah" (verse 21).

This man will be "a father" to the inhabitants of spiritual Jerusalem, or the Church—the people of God.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:15, "[T]hough ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Mr. Armstrong said that he was a father to the brethren in the same sense—that we all come to God, either directly or indirectly, through him. I have to say the same thing today, in the context Paul does. Today people come to God and His Work through me directly, or indirectly through what I have taught. If they don't follow what I teach and what our ministers teach, they don't even know where the Work of God is! They probably don't even know that we're in the Laodicean era.

People come to the Work and truth of God through a man like Paul or like Mr. Armstrong. And here, the type of Eliakim is also called a *father*. There is nothing to indicate that a prophet would be a "father" in the New Testament. This office is given only to **apostles**, as it was to Paul and Mr. Armstrong. Such a work is beyond what a prophet is called to do.

Eliakim is also a "father" to the house of Judah. Why is Eliakim also a father to Judah, where we have no Church members? Eliakim is a father to the "inhabitants of Jerusalem." But he is also a father just to "Judah"—indicating we would have virtually no members from the Jewish nation. We do, however, have a *work* in Judah that ties directly to the Second Coming of Christ. That understanding is critical for our members and the Work of God.

So this prophecy indicates that we would have a critical work in Judah, and that all our members need to understand that. They should look to the "father" figure and support this intensely important part of God's Work.

The leader of our work, Jesus Christ, will return to the land of Judah. We have to keep our focus on Him and His Work, wherever it is.

I believe this prophecy also indicates that we will have a close relationship with some of the Jews, and the spiritual Jews (very elect) must understand and back that work.

“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so HE [Eliakim] shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open” (Isaiah 22:22) If you compare this to Revelation 3:7, God might even give a little *more* authority here to Eliakim in opening doors. When I compare Isaiah 22:22 with Revelation 3:7, it certainly looks to me like Eliakim has more authority in this area. I think it may be because of the *times* we’re living in. America and Britain and Judah are all unraveling right before our eyes!

So if you *only* had Mr. Armstrong’s writings today, could you really come to God’s Work? Some people say they have and believe his writings, but they are not even *close* to doing God’s Work! It isn’t a matter of finding Mr. Armstrong’s work—it’s a matter of FINDING OUT WHERE CHRIST IS LEADING! It’s a matter of finding the Father and Christ, and finding the man God is using.

Again, Ephesians 3:5 says God reveals these truths to prophets and **apostles**, and we must know where He is doing that! You can’t stop at a certain point and say, *I’ve got everything I need!* Jesus Christ is very alive and very active! Every one of those people who just sits there and says, “Well, we’ve got Mr. Armstrong’s material,” is spiritually dying or dead!

Isaiah 22 continues in verse 23, “And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place”—it is a stable work—“and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house.” That refers back to Mr. Armstrong spiritually.

“And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons” (verse 24). This is about *the father’s house*—it’s all about *family*. *Barnes* notes this about the phrase *the offspring and the issue*: “All that proceeded from the family ... sons and daughters.” The Chaldee says “sons and grandsons, youth and children.” God is talking about family.

Did you ever notice how *different* the families in God’s Church are to other families, and our children are to other children? How *wonderfully, beautifully* different they are!

Family was a cornerstone of Mr. Armstrong’s teaching (Malachi 4:5-6). We follow along and teach the very same message. That gets into territory *beyond* what a prophet in the New Testament would do.

The fruits of an **apostle**

Revelation 10:11 details our commission: “And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” You could say *that* certainly sounds like a prophet’s commission. But there is more to it.

The passage continues: “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (Revelation 11:1-2).

Here we have to measure the altar, which represents the *ministry*. God uses a leader in doing that. Wouldn’t that mean he would have to ordain evangelists? In the New Testament period, I believe only an *apostle* can ordain an evangelist.

All of us need to be measured, me included. *Nobody* can escape that. Anyone who won’t be subject to God’s measure gets put in the outer court. God has CAST OUT all the Laodiceans, using a man.

What happened to all those evangelists who worked under Mr. Armstrong? Where are they? You would have to say that the evangelists in the Philadelphia Church of God are going to be over them—those who repent and make it into God’s Kingdom. I would say that our pastors, and our preaching elders and local church elders, would *all* be over those men. Our lay members will also be over those ministers in God’s Kingdom. It’s truly amazing that *all* those men—*those powerful evangelists and pastors*—would *so quickly* turn away when the **apostle** dies. What is wrong with those men? Were they really measured by God’s **apostle**? I don’t think so, not like they *should* be.

We must not FAKE our religion. We are here to be measured! And as we are measured, look how God blesses us.

These verses are a sweeping overview of a powerful Work of God. I MUST SAY HONESTLY THAT I BELIEVE THE FRUITS OF AN APOSTLE ARE HERE.

I think God didn’t want us to understand this until now, when everybody could see the FRUITS.

You can be sure if God wants us to understand this, there is a powerful reason why. It really gets back to establishing the government of God in His Church, and it’s certainly going to apply to me first of all. We can’t finish this Work without *really* applying the law and the government, and—humanly speaking—GOD KEEPS RAISING THE STANDARD.

We are entering into the most turbulent times in the history of man. God’s government must be strong and stable to finish the Work in this last era of God’s Church.

I can honestly say that I have not been eager to even look into this subject. But *I* am not in charge. I don’t run the Church. *I am NOT the Head of the Church!* I can’t inspire the building of great buildings and the house of God! I can do *nothing* of myself! NOTHING! *All* of God’s ministers and members *must* learn that it doesn’t make any difference what *you or I* think—it’s all about what *Christ* thinks!

As in the days of old

Amos 9:11 says that God is going to “raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen” and “build it AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD.” As the world is falling apart, and people are growing in fear, God wants a *powerful work* to reach out to encourage individuals to repent—“as in the days of old.” What does that mean? **We have a strong television program, and magazines going all over the world, and books and booklets; we have a college; we have a primary and high school; we have another house for God—all “as in the days of old”! Does it also mean there would be an apostle? If the Work is to be raised up “as in the days of old,” and in those days there was an apostle, isn’t it logical that there would be an apostle today? I believe that is what God is showing us.** He really wants to raise the standard! *Do it the way Mr. Armstrong did!* He says. *Build like he did—teach like he did! Continue the Elijah Work!*

We have had a lot of battles, and we will face more in the future. WE MUST BE *EMPOWERED* BY GOD! He does empower us in different ways, and this is one deeply important way: by establishing us more deeply in His government. That ingredient is needed in order to be *EMPOWERED* to do this Work.

When God began using Paul as His instrument, people had a hard time accepting it. Why? Because he had been *killing* some of them! (read Acts 9). How many of the people in the Church do you think would have said, “Well, I think we ought to get Paul to be our **apostle**”? I’m sure they would have said, “Are you crazy?” Yet that is whom God chose!

No human being should aspire to fulfill this office if he is not called by God. As Luke 11:49 says, "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and **apostles**, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute." That "*some*" is in italics, which means it was added by translators. It just says, "and OF THEM they shall slay and persecute." No **apostle** has an EASY MESSAGE to deliver. **Apostles** are going to be persecuted, and some will be killed. We don't know how bad it's going to get. It's not an easy job. Nobody should take on something like that unless he really is empowered by God to do whatever He says do.

Now, if God tells you to do it, *He will give you the power to do it!* But whatever He says, you had better do it!

The signs of an **apostle**

In 2 Corinthians 12:12, Paul says, "Truly the signs of an **apostle** were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." **There are signs of an apostle! Again, I think we can look at this Work—including the college and God's house and everything we are doing—and see those signs.** This is really a responsibility Paul put on the people—to discern those signs.

Paul faced considerable opposition because of his office. He began his letter to the brethren in Galatia, "Paul, an **apostle**, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)" (Galatians 1:1).

This scripture ought to sober us all. It certainly does me. Here is Paul saying, "Look, I'm an **apostle**. It's not of men; it's not *by* man. I was put in this office by Jesus Christ *and* God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead!" That is where the government comes from. Paul really emphasized this because people were always fighting against the government. He mentioned his office as an **apostle** 19 times in the Bible! NINETEEN! He must have really faced some battles over his office! Most of the people didn't believe him.

God's government is far removed from man's government. *We really do* have a government that actually can RAISE THE DEAD! The beings who choose the offices in this government actually raise the dead!

Here is something that makes that statement many times more interesting. When Lazarus died and Christ was going to resurrect him, Martha showed real faithlessness. She said, "If only you'd have gotten here earlier he could have been saved! But now we won't see him until the resurrection." Christ responded, "I AM THE RESURRECTION"! (John 11:25).

Galatians 1:1 speaks about Christ and the Father who raised Him. In other words, you have THE RESURRECTION—and the one who RAISED UP THE RESURRECTION! It's as if the Father is saying, *I RAISED UP the Resurrection—the Being who is going to resurrect EVERYBODY!* That is real power! That is something we ought to take note of! We must not take it lightly when THESE GREAT BEINGS make decisions about how to run the Church! If we try to tweak it here or there, we are in for a rude awakening.

I think God wants to teach us a deeper lesson about government and to help us to understand it more deeply. Then He can bless us all the more.

Again, I am sure that we will be working *for* Mr. Armstrong in the future. But if God tells us to raise up the ruins as in the days of old, we have to realize the standard He is talking about. We won't have the numbers Mr. Armstrong did, but WHAT KIND OF IMPACT MIGHT WE HAVE? **And to help us to do this Work "as in the days of old," He does give us an apostle today, just as He did then.** We can still look to Mr. Armstrong's example and that standard and the *marvelous* example he set. Look what God has built through us as we have followed that example! What a wonderful Work this has been!

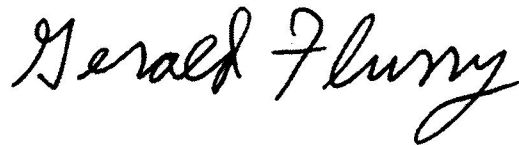
We must not *limit* God! That is what all those evangelists in the Worldwide Church of God did; they limited God.

God's people today are the Bride of Jesus Christ! And the more we get *in sync* with this government, the more blessings are going to come into our lives, and the more magnificent works we will accomplish! And we must do them quickly, because time is just about up! We have to do some spectacular deeds in a very short amount of time.

I believe as people look back at the beginning of the Millennium, they're going to *hunger and thirst* for bits and pieces of information about this last Church era—and the one preceding it, but especially the one just before Christ returns, the greatest event in universe history! Just seeing a picture of a student in front of Armstrong Auditorium may inspire them to think, *Wow! Those are the sons of Zadok! Those are the people who remained locked in to David's throne, and to Jesus Christ, who sits on that throne, and who is going to RESURRECT all these billions and billions of people!* This history is going to fascinate people for a long time. I don't see how it could be otherwise.

I think the office of an apostle is a sign that God wants us to do still a GREATER WORK than what we have done—but in an *extremely short amount of time*. God says He wants us to build and to work *very fast*—as fast as we possibly can—to finish this Work and usher in the wonderful World Tomorrow!

With love, in Jesus's name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Flurry". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the 'G' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Gerald Flurry