

GOD'S CHURCH AND THE TWO WITNESSES

I've proven to myself, most prayerfully, that the Philadelphia Church of God is the most unique of all the groups who've distanced themselves from the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal changes. Only Malachi's Message clearly speaks with AUTHORITY and not "like the scribes" (Matt. 7:29). I've listened carefully for THE Voice of the Shepherd, hearing what the Spirit says to God's Church today, checking out everything with the Bible and what Mr. Armstrong faithfully taught us (Jn. 10:3; Rev. 3:22; II Thess. 2:15).

Of course, there are those who CLAIM to follow the traditions we've been schooled in, yet they've refused to humble themselves and submit to the fact that JESUS CHRIST had already moved HIS LAMPSTAND by the time they finally saw the light! All that was necessary for them to do was to go where Christ had already gone, and support HIS WORK of knocking the errors in the WCG, while holding on for dear life to God's truth! We either GET A GRIP - or we lose it! (Rev. 3:11).

Instead of working with Christ, some have chosen to do their own thing, contributing to the Church's state of confusion, rather than helping to RESTORE ORDER (I Cor. 14:33). Why duplicate efforts, wasting precious time and money? Why not join ranks with the PCG so we can present a UNITED FRONT to an increasingly divided world? This would enable us to effectively share with others the message GOD would have them to hear (Jn. 12:49). We ought to come together, in Christ, especially since we've all been taught repeatedly: "There is only one Church. Not a parent church and many little daughter churches that have split off in disagreement. Divisions splintering off are NOT STILL IN THE CHURCH" (Mystery of the Ages, pg. 243).

Whether we like it or not, God, in His infinite wisdom, chose Gerald Flurry to REVEAL to God's Church what was going on - and thereby allow us to show our true colors by how we responded to Malachi's Message! (That *doesn't* mean Mr. Flurry is infallible or that he doesn't need to continually apply the principles of Malachi's Message to himself, as we all do as explained in my article Worldwide All Over Again?).

Restored to Zion!

If I'm so convinced that Christ is ONLY with the PCG, and that the others are self-willed, for the most part, resisting God's lead, why don't I attend their services? (Matt. 7:21; I Sam. 15:23). And how can I believe that God is actively working through me in the Middle East? Because I've unjustly been disfellowshipped (II Thess. 3:2), yet I remain loyal to God's truth they teach!

God knows my ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS still support the work God's given them to do, but I truly believe what Mr. Flurry teaches: their work's almost finished! It'll just slightly overlap the beginning of GOD'S FINAL WORK as outlined in my book, Beyond Babylon: Europe's Rise and Fall (Jn. 3:30). Minister Dennis Leap disfellowshipped me for believing that GOD has ORDAINED that I should promote its timely truth (Isa. 61:1), even though I'm NOT from the "school of the prophets" (Ambassador College), or going about it in the "conventional" way (I Sam. 17:39)!

I've come to better understand that God has already begun the TRANSITIONAL PROCESS of RESTORING His Menorah - His Lampstand to JERUSALEM! (I Kgs. 11:36; Amos 9:11). As prophesied, a NATIONAL MESSENGER would be on active duty in Jerusalem, preparing the way for Messiah's imminent return! (Zech. 12:8). God reveals HE would send this outspoken individual to deliver a BLISTERING MESSAGE and a SCORCHING CONDEMNATION to the NATIONS - just before NUCLEAR FIRE AND BRIMSTONE RAINS DOWN upon those who've rejected GOD'S ULTIMATUM! (Isa. 41:27; 30:27; Micah 3:8).

It's from Jerusalem that we must warn another HOLOCAUST is coming! That's the sensitive location where God will spark a NATIONAL DEBATE and ignite an INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY! (Micah 6:1-2). It'll shock the Jews and anger the Germans! It'll also, undoubtedly, offend many holocaust survivors who now live in Israel, but they ought to understand and lend their voices of experience to ours, having personally witnessed GERMANY'S BRUTE FORCE, to help our efforts to ensure "Never Again!"

Regardless, we can expect a maelstrom of protest and a bitter backlash - but such persecution will only fan the flames of this BURNING ISSUE! (Isa. 54:15-16). Both Germany and Israel (for their own reasons), will want to immediately stop such "incitement" - calling it fear-mongering and racist - but they'll fail and God's Word will prevail! (Jer. 1:19).

God MUST grant "political immunity" to His Two Witnesses, so they can be free to boldly say and do all that He commands, even though the world will regard them as public enemy number one! (Ps. 105:15; Rev. 11:10). Undeterred, they'll carry on God's Work and serve as His official government spokesmen, even in the hostile face of fierce opposition! (Jer. 1:8). But I'm getting ahead of myself! This is all related in my book, but let's go back to the beginning - of the true Philadelphian era....

Mr. Armstrong's Experiences

In the words of Mr. Armstrong, referring to his dealings with certain Sardis ministers, "I Shall Not Hide the FACTS!" (Autobiography of HWA, Vol. 1, pg. 366). However, lest I be misunderstood, I'd been most hesitant to say or write anything about my experiences with certain professing Philadelphian ministers, but I feel compelled by GOD to state the truth, without fearing men's reactions, but

trusting in God's PURPOSE!

Mr. Armstrong relates how he had presented a "dual test" to the Church of God, Seventh Day, to help him determine whether or not it truly was the Church of God. His first test involved mailing an "exposition of 16 TYPEWRITTEN PAGES proving clearly, plainly, and beyond contradiction that a certain minor point of doctrine... was in error... to see whether their leaders would confess error and change." Their head man admitted what Mr. Armstrong pointed out was true, but feared it might upset many of the members and even threaten to divide the Church! "Naturally, this shook my confidence considerably." (Autobiography of HWA, Vol. I, pgs. 360-361, emphasis mine).

I, too, detected "a certain minor point of doctrine" taught by Mr. Leap (on the 144,000), was in error. I didn't want to rock the boat, and it wasn't something I'd lose sleep over, so I wanted to just ignore or overlook the matter, but God wouldn't let me! Amazingly, a dear friend asked me about the 144,000 out of the blue, and then somehow it came up again with someone else; so God succeeded in getting my attention to write Mr. Leap about it. I sent him my PAGE AND 1/2 LETTER, reproduced here - and didn't hear anything.

Finally, around my third try (I don't give up easily!), Mr. Leap discussed it with me on the phone. When I mentioned that the Scriptures clearly state that once you've broken your "seal" you've lost your salvation, and to claim we can somehow be "resealed" amounts to crucifying Christ twice, Mr. Leap stammered around, unable to justify his position, but remained determined to stick with it - to my sorrow. Like Mr. Armstrong's experience, "Naturally, this shook my confidence considerably."

Church Rejects New Truth

God used an evangelist in Florida to challenge Mr. Armstrong. He had written Mr. Armstrong and told him he was ignorant if he didn't know where we are mentioned in the Bible. After gleaning through the surprising amount of information on the subject in the library, Mr. Armstrong PROVED that the so-called "Lost 10 Tribes" are, in fact, the American, British and Northwest European peoples. He then sent the "lengthy manuscript of close to 300 TYPED PAGES" that he had written to support this truth to the editor and leader of the Church. "Did this Church accept and proclaim this vital new truth... But this Church refused then to accept it or preach it or publish it though their leader frankly confessed it was TRUTH and a revelation from GOD! Yet here was the Church which appeared to have more truth, and less error than any other... Truly this was bewildering!" (Pg. 362).

What's BEWILDERING to me is the different responses I've received from several of God's ministers who have read Beyond Babylon - towards it and me - before and after Mr. Leap's PARTIAL review! (Malachi 2:9).

When I faithfully sent a computer disc with my book on it to Mr. Wayne Turgeon, he graciously read all of it and responded: "Of, how I admire those with both the ability to write as well as the courage to put down their ideas on paper! I felt that you have a very gripping style of writing that uses twists and slants of words or phrases to make your point. I looked up every scripture you referenced and it became clear that you have really spent a lot of time in your Bible. Being Jewish, I think, gives you an added perspective that I could never have... Much of what you have written is not 'new revelation' as I'm sure that you'd readily agree... It's certainly not my place to determine if what you believe God has shown you is true or not, but would you mind presenting Mr. Flurry with an abbreviated version of what you feel is inspired... as I highly doubt that he would have time to read your whole book."

What does he mean it's not his place to determine if what I wrote is true or not? God holds every INDIVIDUAL responsible to prayerfully determine whether something is of God or not! How did we prove Malachi's Message was Biblical? Did we rely solely on our minister's evaluation? Worldwide all over again?

Mind you, unlike Mr. Armstrong's lengthy manuscript of close to 300 typed pages, Beyond Babylon is only 1/2 that size, literally! I suggested Mr. Flurry read the first and last chapters. Mr. Turgeon told me Mr. Flurry returned it to him, saying something like, "He's always sending us stuff."

I have written short letters to the point, like correcting him about Mt. Hermon and Mt. Carmel after he continued to confuse the two in several articles. I'm familiar with them because I've been blessed to have lived next to both of them! Mr. Turgeon also wrote that I was a little "too radical" for Mr. Flurry and wondered what I'd said or done that had given him that impression. I explained it's because I took exception to Mr. Flurry's careless condemnation of those religious Jews who want the Temple built as "extremists." I wrote that it's extremist for secular, humanist Jews to oppose converting the Promised Land into a Holy Land!

Mr. Flurry was surprised and had also written against the STRONG EMOTIONS some feel over Jerusalem and Israel. How could God use someone so distant over there?! Some of us have a GOD-GIVEN LOVE for Jerusalem and a genuine passion for Judah that's most personal; we're not a stranger in OUR Homeland! (Psalms 102:14; Ps. 137; Isaiah 62). That's not "radical," it's BIBLICAL!

Minister Carl Craven also read Beyond Babylon and acknowledged it as Biblical. He said he hadn't looked up every scripture, but was sure if he had they'd also be used correctly. I commented that I know it's Biblical, but that I was just waiting for headquarters to prove that to themselves as well. He expressed an understanding of how it's difficult to be patient meanwhile. When Mr. Leap did

call, it was to instruct me to STAY HOME FROM SABBATH SERVICES while he looked at the book! I didn't recall such an unusual request being made of Mr. Armstrong, and recognized it went against "innocent until proven guilty," but obliged with the hope of returning soon (Jn. 7:51).

"Prophecy Not!"

After some time, I called Mr. Leap. He said he'd read PARTS of the book, and that it wasn't important whether Mr. Flurry had read it or not (even though I'd been led to believe he'd pass it on to him). He stated, "You use some pretty strong language in there," to which I replied, "But it's Biblical, isn't it?" "Well, yes, but...". He also noted, like Mr. Turgeon, that most of it is what we already teach. I agreed and said that that should serve as a GOOD SIGN, but that the NEW REVELATION about the Two Witnesses and Europe is firmly built upon that foundation.

Mr. Leap found it difficult to accept that a LAY MEMBER would write such a book. He admitted Mr. Flurry had received bits of revelation from lay members, but NEVER a whole book! I didn't want to be judged by precedent, but by whether or not what I'd written is Biblical. If I was in error, then it was his duty to clearly show me where FROM THE BIBLE, like Aquilla and Priscilla helped improve Apollos' understanding (Acts 18:26).

I was informed if I wanted to return to services, I would have to forget Beyond Babylon, act like a "regular lay member," and basically deny that it was from God! Like Mr. Armstrong, I had PROVEN what I'd written to be TRUE. Actually, Mr. Leap didn't say that it wasn't or attempt to refute it! I told Mr. Leap I didn't want to play politics. By his insistence that I must be a MINISTER to write such a book, he was still looking to MEN OF STATURE! And since I'm not one, he was demanding that I "PROPHECY NOT!" (Amos 2:12). He got very angry when I mentioned this and said he was severing all ties between the PCG and myself, and that I wasn't to claim any association with the PCG. He said I was now free to go and do whatever I felt God would have me to do with BB and not worry whether or not he or Mr. Flurry had read it! When I expressed the hope of reconciliation, he retorted we could when I repented. Of what? OBEYING GOD RATHER THAN MAN? Is that "rebellion?"

Mr. Armstrong WASN'T an ordained minister either when he wrote what he felt GOD would have him to share! The Identity Doctrine also wasn't so much new truth, as a new way of presenting it. I'm sure glad he didn't let those two points stop him! Aren't you? So I was UNJUSTLY DISFELLOWSHIPED for believing God used me to write a book, and MARKED for exposing the facts about Mr. Leap's folly!

Will Mr. Leap stop being jealous of what God would have me to offer (I Sam. 2:29)? Will Mr. Flurry HONOR GOD more than a man, and recognize BB belongs to God and HIS Church? (II Sam. 19:5-7; Ga. 2:9). Will Mr. Flurry again uphold God's Word or try and prop up Mr. Leap and fall with him? (Isa. 22:19). Did God remove Mr. Amos so Dennis Leap could be used to try us all?(Nahum 1:11). WHY'S THE BIBLE OUT OF THE PICTURE? (In The Philadelphia Trumpet's photo of Mr. Flurry). Does Mr. Flurry feel he's now got it made? (I Cor. 10:12). A picture's worth a thousand words!

No Cowards in the Kingdom!

May God give COURAGE to His people! If they're AFRAID to question Mr. Leap's serious actions, how can God expect them to stand up to the world (Jer. 12:5; Rev. 21:8)? God's sick of sycophants and tired of the timid! We're to be bold as lions (Dan. 11:32)! We're supposed to be ready to die for one another, NOT betray and desert each other! Yet too often the household of faith has lost its warm and loving environment for an intimidating atmosphere of fear and oppression (Jer. 12:6)! It's pretty bad when you can't trust your own family (Jer. 9:4)! Brethren turning in brethren to the "authorities" for wrong reasons and maliciously reporting on others (I Cor. 5:8). How COLD-HEARTED (Matt. 10:32-40)!

God pronounces WOE to those who support wrong judgments (Isa. 5:32) and CONDEMNS IT as an ABOMINATION (Prov. 17:15)! He speaks against SELLING OUT someone to gain an advantage (Ex. 23:8). Those who've become ACCOMPLICES to CHARACTER ASSASSINATION haven't just abandoned a Church member, they're guilty of BETRAYING CHRIST! (Ex. 20:16; Matt. 10:33). It's actually God's law they've thrown out and His Word they've despised (Isa. 5:24)! You can't treat someone so hatefully and fool God that you love Him (I Jn. 4:20)! You might turn your back on a brother, but you're going to FACE GOD (Mk. 9:42)!

Whether you've sold out to curry favor with a minister, or to stay put in an organization or position - that "blood money" will COST YOU YOUR LIFE! God will JUDGE SUCH PEOPLE (if they don't repent) and throw them down from their high and mighty imaginations and lofty positions (Isa. 22:15-19; Deut. 32:36)! For those bent on JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS blindly, acting like GOOD NAZIS, God's going to give them over to Europe! If that's what you want, that's what you'll get!

FATHER Knows Best!

Too MANY are still looking to MEN to save them! Is it up to Mr. Flurry to decide who'll enter God's Kingdom? Of course not, and he'd readily agree, but brethren it's just as BLASPHEMOUS to believe it's up to him or any other MAN to decide who can go to Petra! Which minister was crucified for you? (I Cor. 1:12-13; 3:3-9). Into what surname were you baptized? If GOD put you into HIS Church, can any man put you out? If God gave you His Holy Spirit, can any minister take it away? If God finds you worthy to escape, can any man prevent it? (Lk. 21:36). WHOSE APPROVAL ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? (Jn. 9:22; 13:42-43).

Aren't you willing to be like Jesus, who was forsaken by all? Aren't you willing to follow Jesus outside the camp, bearing His reproach and suffering His shame? (Heb. 13:12-13; 2 Tim. 1:8). Those who put an IDOLATROUS TRUST in ministers or politicians are going to discover they can't deliver! (Deut. 32:36-39; Hosea 13:10). Mortals can't save you or protect you! Besides, if you're only trying to save your skin, you'll lose your hide! Only Jesus Christ can offer salvation, and only those whom the FATHER finds worthy will escape! It's not up to any pastor general or minister! Many of them will get slaughtered with THEIR sheep! (I Cor. 9:27; Isa. 46:2).

If God could provide the "travel arrangements" for Enoch, Elijah and Philip - INDIVIDUALS - can't He take care of you? (Acts 8:39; Rev. 12:6; Jer. 3:14). God won't forget you or leave you behind! (Heb. 6:10; Isa. 49:15). He knows the scattered condition of His saints and the reasons why, and promises us: "I will seek that which is lost, and bring that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick..." (Ezek. 34:16). The Good Shepherd doesn't forsake His flock!

God's Two Witnesses are SOON to take the stand! They'll testify before a WORLD COURT, and to many it will sound familiar - having read about it in BB! It's only Biblical that just as surely as Europe's on the rise, so too are God's star witnesses (Isa. 60:1)! But when have proud and stubborn RELIGIOUS LEADERS ever accepted God's change of guard or venue (Rev. 11:8)? Sardis didn't. Mr. Tkach didn't. Will Mr. Flurry graciously PASS THE BATON to the Two Witnesses? Or will history repeat itself? We'll see!

LETTERS TO DENNIS LEAP

November 17, 1993

Dear Mr. Leap:

You've encouraged us to PROVE everything, and to "be more firmly convicted" about Malachi's Message and the PCG literature, in your two-part article about the 144,000. I appreciate this sound advice, and I'm happy to say that I am convinced that GOD has inspired Mr. Flurry's understanding, writing and speaking. However, serious questions remain concerning the 144,000.

- 1) Mr. Flurry realized: "The 144,000 could be only one of 3 possible groups: the great multitude, the Philadelphians, or the Laodiceans." I hope the following will help to make it clear that the 144,000 are part of THE GREAT MULTITUDE.
- 2) The apostle John was simply following the tradition that the Bible was written to, for, and about ISRAEL; primarily "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). God gets specific about Israel and remains general about the Gentiles.
- 3) Every Laodicean is NOT an Israelite, and as Mr. Armstrong taught: "the prophecy is plain and means just what it says - 144,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel - 12,000 of each tribe."
- 4) "The 144,000 are sealed immediately AFTER the Tribulation and immediately before the Day of the Lord" (Malachi's Message/emphasis mine). The Laodiceans are destined to die WITHIN and throughout the Tribulation - not immediately after it.
- 5) The beheaded saints "can only be Laodiceans, also known as the 144,000"? Whereas the Laodiceans must die as a consequence of sin, isn't it possible, and most probable, that some others (converted during the Tribulation) will also suffer persecution and death for righteousness' sake" (Rev. 14:13).
- 6) Immediately AFTER the Tribulation, the 144,000 are sealed. Those converted throughout the tribulation will have already been sealed by God's Holy Spirit. This is a SEPARATE SEAL. It's sole purpose is for PHYSICAL PROTECTION (Rev. 7:3; 9:4). We've seen how God's servants need more than the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 9:4). The Laodiceans have God's Spirit - but not His protection! Having God's Spirit doesn't automatically insure our safety: for "full coverage" we must receive the added protection of a mark of distinction - a SPECIAL GOVERNMENT SEAL OF APPROVAL (Lk. 21:36). The Philadelphians will already have this; those converted throughout the Tribulation must receive it.
- 7) If you've lost your oil - by breaking your seal - YOU'VE LOST YOUR OPPORTUNITY for salvation. If you're out of oil, you're out of time (Mat. 25:1-13). We've all grieved God's Holy Spirit, and some have come precariously close to quenching it - although King David still had God's Spirit after more than a year of living in sin (Ps. 51:11) - but once it's gone, IT'S GONE! We can't crucify Christ twice (Heb. 6:4-8). WE'RE TO MAKE SURE OUR SEAL'S SAFE AND SECURE (Heb. 2:1-3), lest that which was sanctified become common; worthless (Mat. 5:13).

God help us all to be SIGNED (bear the Father's Royal Name/Lev. 8:9), SEALED (secure your salvation/2 Pet. 1:10), and DELIVERED (into God's Kingdom/Col. 1:13)!

Thank you for your patience, prayerful consideration, and understanding. I do realize how difficult it is for teachers and writers, since you're held to higher standards and are subject to greater public scrutiny (Jas. 3:1). nevertheless, I'm sure it's a great honor and privilege to be one of Jesus' scribes (Mat. 23:34).

Sincerely yours,
David Ben-Ariel

Dear Mr. Leap:

After our last discussion, it occurred to me that by your insistence that the Two Witnesses must come from the MINISTRY, excluding any possibility that they could come from the "field," some lowly lay members, it seems you're still looking to MEN OF STATURE. I declared that I consider this totally unscriptural, and that God often chose His prophets outside of the established priesthood. I encouraged you to not "limit the Holy One of Israel," and also reminded you how the ministry used to believe Mr. Armstrong and Garner Ted were the Two Witnesses, and how they were dead wrong. I asked you from where did you think the Two Witnesses would receive their commission, obtain their understanding and revelation - from Mr. Flurry or from any other man?

To whom GOD reveals his truth, God uses them to get His Message across. For example: Daniel didn't receive word from God to be recorded in a prophetic book bearing someone else's name! The Two Witnesses are NOT called ministers, they're called PROPHETS. This explains how they could receive an abundance of revelation, without being a minister, having been ORDAINED BY GOD (Ga. 1:12). They look to God for their inspiration and promotion, that they may further promote GOD'S TRUTH, not themselves (Ps. 113:7-8). They're only a vehicle whereby God's Message will get driven home to the nations (Rev. 10:10).

You said I've put myself on a "level with Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Flurry." I said if I had, it was reluctantly. Actually, I feel God has given me the BURDEN OF BEYOND BABYLON - in spite of myself (2 Cor. 4:7)! I feel obligated to share it's message of warning and hope (I Cor. 9:16). It is the FIRST book ever written, in detail, about how the Two Witnesses will testify before the world court. God sends the Truth first, then he allows Satan to try and confuse the issue by sending counterfeits. Messrs. Armstrong and Flurry have both written barely a paragraph on the Two Witnesses, and that's good and right - because it's NOT their commission! You mentioned a couple who claimed to be the Two Witnesses, something I've never claimed (though I do claim to know more about their message than anyone I know), and told me several things they believed that are easily disproved from the Bible. What God has given me to write does NOT contradict the Bible, nor our Church doctrines; rather Beyond Babylon is based upon both. It's message graces the gospel and complements the Kingdom. Beyond Babylon rests its case upon the LAW and the COVENANT (Lev. 26:44), proclaiming GOD'S FAITHFULNESS as our ONLY HOPE! But how can you or Mr. Flurry ever see that UNLESS you prayerfully read it (Ga. 2:9)?

I know the PCG is where Christ is actively working. I know Mr. Flurry continues in Mr. Armstrong's footsteps. But I also know that I must be obedient to Jesus Christ, the Head of God's Church, and declare what He has shown me (Isa. 48:6). THIS is learning to follow God's government! I cannot bury any "talent" God's given me merely to be accepted by men. That would be living a lie.

I strongly believe Mr. Flurry would validate Beyond Babylon and share it with the Church - as God would have him do - once he takes the time to examine its evidence, just as he wanted Pasadena to hear him out - not shut him out. I pray to our Living God that my exile from His holy Sabbath services will soon come to an end, and that any misunderstandings would be Biblically resolved (I Sam. 26:19; Isa. 51:14; Ps. 69:33).

Awaiting the Dawn,
David Ben-Ariel