

A d d e n d u m

The pivotal question posed in our main letter (p. 3), is the essential key (Rev. 3:7) to understanding the mystery of the Church's divided, compromised state today, and to understanding what God wants us all to observe and achieve in these last days, in order to be "accounted worthy to escape." In this addendum, we offer an amplified discussion of the principal evidence regarding the pivotal question.

Through the apostles in the Ephesus era, Christ established in the Church the *complete Truth, without any error in doctrine*. The Church's test thereafter was to *hold fast to all the Truth* "once for all [time] delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The doctrine of the apostles was not to be changed in *any respect*; they commanded God's people, especially the ministry, to hold fast to the doctrine exactly as delivered. Six books of the New Testament make this command their primary theme, applying it to the succeeding eras of the Church (see main letter, pp. 14-15).

Yet even during the lifetime of the apostles, other ministers began to advocate that some of the apostles' doctrine was erroneous and needed correction. This eventually resulted in the formation of counterfeit Christianity (the Catholic Church and later her Protestant daughters). It also affected God's Church, however, which began to drift somewhat from, and eventually lost, certain aspects of original Truth. This process of sporadic drifting from Truth slowly continued over the centuries until the end of the Sardis era. By that time, as Herbert W. Armstrong often explained, the true Church had lost so much of the original Truth that it was nearly dead (Rev. 3:1-2).

Christ declared that in the last days He would send a man in the spirit and power of Elijah to "restore all things" (Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 17:11). Recall how often Mr. Armstrong explained that "restore all things" meant *all the Truth* "once for all [time] delivered" through the original apostles. Though this Truth is in the Bible in principle, if one receives great enough understanding to piece it all together ("here a little, there a little"), no one was given *full* understanding of it again over the centuries until the one sent in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Herbert W. Armstrong taught that he was the one Christ sent. The fruits prove it: no one can deny that through Mr. Armstrong Christ performed the greatest work of proclaiming the Gospel ever done in the earth. Equally important, no one can deny that many key points of original Truth, lost over the centuries, were *first revealed again to Herbert W. Armstrong uniquely*—as were key elements of prophecy "shut up and sealed until the time of the end" (see main letter, pp. 3, 13-14). Mr. Armstrong then taught all this understanding to the rest of us. All the Truth the splinter organization leaders still teach they learned directly from Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong, on the other hand, like the original apostles, was not taught the Truth by any *man*, but by direct revelation from Christ (through His Word). When he first began to fellowship with the Sardis Church as a *lay congregant*, he already knew *far more Truth* than any of its ministry.

As Herbert W. Armstrong was the one uniquely sent to "restore all things"—all the unchangeable original Truth—his doctrine cannot be changed by *any succeeding leader*. No one in the splinter organizations today doubts that the doctrine of the original apostles, as reflected in

the Bible, was *infallible*. The apostles were fallible men, who sinned and made mistakes, but by Christ's power, to fulfill God's great purpose, the doctrine and spiritual judgments they established in the Church are completely reliable and authoritative for all ages. Christ Himself said that in the last days He would send another man with *the same miraculous understanding as the original apostles*, so he could accurately *restore all* the Truth they originally established in the Church. Mr. Armstrong was a fallible man, but Christ fulfilled His Word and purpose through Mr. Armstrong perfectly by the end of his life.

Mr. Armstrong often explained that the complete original Truth was not revealed to him all at once and he continued to receive it into his last year, culminating in *Mystery of the Ages*. Therefore he had to correct or augment Church doctrine every time new understanding was revealed to him over the years. The first twelve apostles themselves, as shown in Acts and elsewhere, did not *fully* understand *all* the Truth in the Church's earlier years. Christ continued to teach them through the Spirit, and as they learned more perfectly, so did the Church (John 16:12-13). Even though the apostles had to learn over time, *no one else's spiritual judgment was being inspired as theirs was*. Therefore it was *grievous spiritual error* to follow *anyone else's* opinions about where the apostles were wrong or incomplete in their understanding.

False ministers, during the apostles' lives and especially shortly after, led many people astray by claiming that, because the apostles were fallible and had made mistakes they later had to correct, other aspects of their doctrine could be wrong that they had never recognized. Yet the truth was that Christ *completed* His purpose in them: however long it took them to perfectly understand every point, the apostles eventually did establish infallible doctrine in the Church and *left it in place at their deaths*.

Similarly, and by definition, the man *specially commissioned by God* to "restore all things" must have *accomplished it* before he died; God's purpose cannot fail. The commissioned one, even though he made mistakes along the way, must have eventually restored *all* the *infallible doctrine* of the Ephesus era. Because this was spiritually *certain*, Mr. Armstrong *gravely and repeatedly warned* Church leaders in his last years, even his last weeks, not to change Church doctrine or government if he should die; his grave warnings expressly encompassed the judgments of *spiritual sin* he had established in the Church. Preparatory to his death, Mr. Armstrong *emphatically reconfirmed each* of the doctrines and judgments God's people now debate whether to obey.

Such doctrines and judgments included, among others: cornerstone precepts of God's Church government rejected by all the main splinter organizations today; the prohibition of makeup as *spiritual sin*; the *promise* of healing in Christ's body broken for us, and the understanding that the promise is effectively *rejected* by use of most types of *medical treatment*; *disfellowshipping* members for marrying outside the Church or interracial; the stringent divorce and remarriage doctrine; rejection of "liberal" views on the priority of the First Commission, on Sabbath observance, on the importance of U.S. & B.C., on college accreditation, on birthdays, etc. Mr. Armstrong also confirmed that tithing net of taxes in the U.S. is *theft* from God (the U.S. system has not changed substantially since 1986 and does not even approach his very narrow exceptions).

Most of God's people accept that Mr. Armstrong, sent by Christ, was the human founder and governor of the Philadelphia era. The message to the leader of Philadelphia in Revelation 3 contains *no criticism* (unlike other eras). In fact, Philadelphia is only exhorted to "hold fast what you have, that no man may take your crown": the obvious understanding is that they received the complete Truth, and their great test is not to "correct"/change the doctrine they received, but rather whether they will let *men* talk them into *exchanging aspects of it for false doctrine*, as happened in the other eras.

When you hear *students* of the founding human teacher of Philadelphia telling you they understand Truth better than he did, such that the doctrine he left in place in Philadelphia at his death was erroneous in important aspects, alarm bells should go off in you spiritually. "A servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent [trained and ordained] him" (John 13:16). Remember that these new leaders conveniently taught all Mr. Armstrong's doctrine without deviation while he was alive, *as he would have disfellowshipped them for teaching then what they do now*; and he did disfellowship other ministers, especially the infamous seventies liberals, for teaching *essentially the same* doctrinal revisions these new leaders teach.

Did the human founder, governor, and greatest teacher of Philadelphia disfellowship hundreds of people for believing Truth? Did God allow him to *purposely block* important aspects of Truth from being received in the Church in the Philadelphia era? Was he wrong and *Joseph Tkach right* about the end-time Elijah, cornerstone precepts of Church government, Christ's *precise* Gospel message, healing/medical treatment, makeup, accreditation, and other doctrines where the teaching of Meredith, Hulme, and both branches of United is closer to Tkach's (pre-1993) than to Mr. Armstrong's? If the doctrine of these present leaders is right, then *Garner Ted's 1970's liberal doctrine was much more spiritually accurate than his father's doctrine that "put the Church back on track."* Do you believe such things? If not, the only possible explanation is that the Laodicean *condition* has flourished since Mr. Armstrong died, and infected all the main organizations.

Even Flurry and Pack are closer to Tkach's teaching than Mr. Armstrong's on the cornerstone restored Truth of Church government: each man appointed himself an apostle in gross violation of Mr. Armstrong's doctrine.

Some ask what authority we hold to say everyone else is wrong and we are right. Our authority is not our own but that which God invested in Herbert W. Armstrong as the *restorer of all the original Truth*. The authority of so great a commission and apostleship does not die when the human instrument dies, any more than the authority of the original apostles ended at their deaths. Such authority continues until Christ's return (and beyond). Anyone who teaches God's people contrary to doctrines of the restored Truth is in *rebellion* against undying *Godly authority*. Mr. Armstrong said repeatedly that, if apostasy should ever arise in the Church, any of God's ministry or people who see their brethren rejecting/changing doctrines of the restored Truth not only have authority to point it out, but they have a *duty* to their brethren to try to show them their error.

In a dispute among God's people over specific doctrines of Truth, by definition only *one* of the disagreeing viewpoints can be *God's*; Christ is not divided (see main letter, p. 2). Thus, it will always be the case in such disputes that the people of one viewpoint *justly* say they are right and all the others wrong, and it will often be the case that they are at least temporarily condemned by the others for their "self-righteousness." Typically those who so condemn *themselves* believe they are right and the others wrong, as is true of the leaders of every splinter organization today. These leaders have the gall to summarily condemn anyone who questions their righteousness in rejecting doctrine which *they themselves once taught is Truth restored by the end time apostle*.

We turn now to some important misunderstandings common among God's people regarding Mr. Armstrong's makeup prohibition and healing doctrine. It is no accident that these were the first doctrines Joseph Tkach rejected after appointing himself an apostle: the two doctrines were signature issues of the apostasy of the 1970's liberals.

After restoring the makeup prohibition in 1981, Mr. Armstrong taught until his death that makeup use is *spiritual* sin: he insisted its prohibition was not just a physical Church grooming regulation, and that it made no difference if makeup attained the height of respectability throughout society. Rather, he declared that makeup use is *inherently* sinful, as a practice of *vanity*—not wrong merely because it could cause division in the Church or would be rebellious against Church government. Mr. Armstrong repeatedly threatened publicly to disfellowship any minister who denied makeup use is spiritual sin. Meredith, Hulme, and United's leaders (both branches) are all guilty of this disqualifying apostasy.

Mr. Armstrong explained his makeup doctrine in several articles and sermons/Bible studies which are still publicly available, including some of his last. One prominent example was an extensive article in the July 1, 1983, *Pastor General's Report*, in which he gravely pronounced that makeup use "will certainly lead to DEATH in the LAKE OF FIRE!" (Emphasis his). Many ministers have falsely characterized Mr. Armstrong's makeup doctrine in order to justify their refusal to hold fast to it—relying that many of God's people have forgotten, and will not review, what Mr. Armstrong actually enjoined regarding makeup use. Will you *bet your eternal life* he was wrong?

Similar false information has been spread, for similar reasons, regarding Mr. Armstrong's healing doctrine. Many former Headquarters personnel know Mr. Armstrong's use of doctors was for very limited purposes, mainly nutritional, to naturally strengthen the body's own recuperative powers, vitality, and immune system function. Even Tkach knew Mr. Armstrong intended no change on healing by his very limited use of doctors. As noted earlier, Mr. Armstrong warned that his healing doctrine, reflected in both his original 1950's booklet and his 1979 updated/expanded version, was part of the restored Ephesus era Truth God commanded the Church to hold fast after his death. In those booklets, and periodically in sermons in his last years, Mr. Armstrong solemnly warned that seeking most forms of medical treatment is inconsistent with real faith in the promise of healing by Christ's stripes—the promise that, "He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains" (often caused by physical sin) (Isaiah 53:4—literal translation).

Today many ask how one can know who is right in the confusion of all the competing and conflicting messages God's people hear. The simple answer is to know *Herbert W. Armstrong was right*, by Christ's authority; the doctrine Mr. Armstrong left behind is the original Truth *restored for the end time*. Utilizing that straightforward standard will, upon careful scrutiny, exclude every erroneous message, and expose every messenger who falsely claims God's authority to lead His people. Shun the false messengers, and return to *all* the Truth once delivered. Our being accounted worthy to escape depends upon it.

We pray God will guide you.

Your brethren

NOTE: Following publication of our main letter, United suffered a schism resulting in a profound loss of membership and ministry. All the ministers who left quickly formed a new organization—again, without *first* securing, as *Biblically-commanded*, stable *unity* on controverted issues of doctrine and government. Once more, full ministerial *employment* was the great priority, not righteousness. It seems a significant number of people who left United have not joined the new organization or any other organization yet. The new organization's leadership appears a little less liberal in doctrine than United's, and it is somewhat displeased with the democratic "babylon" of United's government. Yet, about half its ministry *disagree* with significant aspects (and *leaders*) of the organization's newly adopted government. Overall, the new organization is *far* closer to United's doctrine and government than Mr. Armstrong's—to the disappointment of a substantial minority of its members, and others who either stayed at United or "went home" following the schism.