

BACK TO BABYLON!

Since 1967, the Worldwide Church of God has plunged into sin and returned to spiritual Babylon. The roller coaster ride has gained momentum and increased in velocity. God Almighty commands His true people, "COME OUT OF BABYLON!" From the apotheosis of a man to the descent into apostasy, the signs and evidence tell the most amazing story of corruption, plotting, intrigue, and conspiracy the mind of man can imagine. In this article we summarize the evidence, and reveal plainly what God Almighty says YOU should do about it, in order to save yourself and your family! TAKE HEED! This may be the only warning and witness that a loving, merciful God will give to you, before the Great Tribulation claims its victims, with you and your loved ones among its intended victims!

WILLIAM F. DANKENBRING

In 1967 Loma D. Armstrong lay dying of an intestinal blockage. She and her husband refused to allow doctors to operate to surgically remove the problem, the concretion of a medication which completely plugged up her bowels. As a result she soon died after intense suffering. It appears that Mrs. Armstrong suffered so much because of taking water, soon after taking the medication, which was not allowed according to the instructions. This apparently caused the blockage. However, it could easily have been removed surgically, if the Armstrongs had been willing at that point to consult a physician or allow a surgeon to operate. Mrs. Armstrong, after her husband had insisted for decades that doctors and their medicines and drugs and surgery were "of the devil," and contrary to "faith in God," refused to allow doctors to treat her condition. One might say, therefore, that she died in faith -- but it was undoubtedly an ignorant faith. Jesus Christ Himself said that it is not the well who need a physician, but those who are sick. Solomon wrote that a medicine does good. Nevertheless, it appears that Mrs. Armstrong was very sincere in her belief, and death was the result.

Many people regarded Loma D. Armstrong as the real spiritual power behind Herbert W. Armstrong, the only one who dared to disagree with him, or say, "No, Herbert, that is not right." It was through Mrs. Armstrong in 1926 that Herbert first was forced to face the truth of the weekly Sabbath day; her refusal to compromise with revealed truth angered and infuriated him, so he began studying the Bible in an attempt to prove her wrong. But to his chagrin and dismay, he discovered that she was right after all!

After associating with the Church of God Seventh Day for several years, and being ordained a minister by their Oregon Conference in 1931, he began broadcasting in January 1934, and began the PLAIN TRUTH magazine in February 1934. In those early years, he studied the Bible hours a day, and God revealed to him many basic truths unknown by most churches and

ministers -- truths about the Sabbath, the annual holy days, the mortality of the soul, the truth about the false idea of an ever-burning hell, and truth about the identity of the United States and British Commonwealth in Biblical prophecy. God revealed to him, as he studied, many wonderful truths. .

However, during those turbulent years, due to problems in his own marriage, it is a fact that Herbert fell a victim to his own lusts of the flesh, and did things which were not right in the sight of God. The problems he encountered, and the sins which plagued his ministry, are documented in our article, "How Are The Mighty Fallen!" One of the most serious allegations that surfaced, and has been written about by ex-ministers of the Worldwide Church of God, and even his own son, is the serious statement that during the 1930's he began sexually abusing his own daughter over a period of ten years. This fact has been documented in several published sources.

Nevertheless, in the 1950's, after Herbert Armstrong moved the Church headquarters to Pasadena, California, and established Ambassador College, the Church began to grow and multiply in scope and power. During the '30s and '40s the Church seemed to grow very little, partly due to Herbert's conviction that World War II was the final war leading up to Armageddon and the return of Jesus Christ. He continually made false, erroneous predictions of the outcome of battles and events of World War II, predicting Nazi victory and a final showdown at Jerusalem. Little did he anticipate Field Marshall Montgomery's victory at El Alemain in Egypt, causing the Nazi armies in Africa to retreat westward, away from the Middle East. These prophetic failures of Herbert Armstrong are documented in my article, "The Astonishing Prophetic Errors of Herbert W. Armstrong!"

But even after World War II and his prophetic debacles, Herbert still had not learned his lessons, and predicted time after time in sermons, in Co-worker letters, and in the pages of the PLAIN TRUTH that the Church would flee to a place of safety, a barren archaeological ruin called Petra in the Jordanian desert , in spring of 1972 and remain there for three and one half years, or until October 1975, when he predicted Jesus Christ

would return in glory and majesty to usher in the Kingdom of God on the earth!

The Church grew rapidly during the 1960's, about 30 per cent a year, but as 1972 drew near and the Church did not flee as predicted, many began thinking twice about Herbert Armstrong's prophecies, and leadership, and growth began to slow. Some began leaving the church. When 1972 passed, and nothing significant happened, and the prophesied flight to safety did not occur, many people were devastated, and many ministers began to have doubts about some of the basic doctrines of the church, including the "healing" doctrine, tithing, divorce and remarriage, prophecy, and strong centralized church government. Therefore, in 1974 a ministerial Rebellion occurred, as scores of ministers left the Church over allegations of improprieties in the Armstrong leadership, doctrinal hassles over healing, divorce, and tithing, and a major dispute over the correct date to observe Pentecost, one of the annual holy days of God.

One of the major issues leading to the ministerial split and division in the Church was the "Watergate" style cover-up of the rampant sins and adulteries of Garner Ted Armstrong, the son

of Herbert Armstrong, and "heir apparent" to take over the Church when his father died. It became known to the ministry in 1974 that the younger Armstrong had been committing adultery with a large number of Ambassador college girls, coeds, baby-sitters, and other women. In fact, although he was married and the father of three sons, in 1974 Garner Ted was so taken with a young stewardess who served on his Falcon jet, that he was ready to divorce his wife Shirley to marry her. In the ensuing investigation, it was discovered that Ted Armstrong had been leading the life of a spiritual lecher and womanizer for many years, a "secret playboy life" of America's leading evangelist. The number women with whom he had slept with or dallied with sexually were said to be over 200 (his own confession) over a period of years.

Crisis in the 1970s

In a letter dated April 25, 1972, Herbert Armstrong said, "Last autumn I was dismayed to learn that my son had been so overcome with personal emotional problems, that it led to conduct inconsistent with the high standard of the Work of the Church of God and the scriptural qualifications for a minister of Jesus Christ." At this time Ted Armstrong was given a leave of absence and encouraged to repent of his sins.

Armstrong then printed a copy of his son's letter to him, admitting, "I have no excuses. I sinned mightily against God, against His Church and His Apostle; against the wife God gave me in my youth; against all my closest friends." In his letter Ted begged for forgiveness. It was subsequently granted. But Ted's problems were not over. Not by a long shot!

Armstrong continues in his letter, admitting that his son was forgiven and accepted back into the Church, with all the responsibilities he had held before. He was not demoted, or penalized, but fully reinstated. But in the following months, Ted's grievous adulterous liaisons continued. So Armstrong was forced to admit in his letter, "But subsequent events, attitude and conduct, to our great dismay, demonstrated to the Board members, ministers, and myself that the process of repentance was not complete." Armstrong admitted they had acted too hastily in reinstating Ted, saying, "But we had come to realize, as did my son also, that he must take a considerable period of time to regain his spiritual strength and stability, before he can even contemplate the resumption of his heavy responsibilities, or duties in preaching and broadcasting."

At that time the Church of God membership itself was not told the serious nature of Ted's so-called "emotion problems." The fact that sexual infidelity was involved on a massive scale of long continuance was never admitted publicly by Herbert Armstrong, who sought to sweep the whole sorry mess under the carpet and hide it from public view. He was fearful of the damage such a revelation would cause to the Church and the "Work" of God. Others, who discovered the real sins of Garner Ted Armstrong, were not so charitable. In their eyes, the whole "mess" smacked of a religious "cover-up" and ranked right up there with the sordid "Watergate" conspiracy cover-up of President Richard Nixon -- only worse, since the sins of Garner Ted Armstrong were far worse in God's sight than a small-time "burglary" attempt by a few extra-zealous political hacks. It was only with the publication of exposes of Ted's sins in publications outside the Church, that the facts about his flagrant womanizing ever became known to many Church members and ministers in the Church. The "cover up" continued, for years, as Ted

consistently refused to admit the truth of the allegations and to face the evidence against him. Many members themselves refused to face the truth, believing fervently that their minister -- their "idol" -- could never have done such things, or insisting that the allegations were exaggerated and overblown. Many wanted to give him a second or even a third chance, and few really ever learned the extent of his philandering and womanizing. In fact, the truth of the matter only became known to those who were willing to open their eyes and look.

Despite these problems, however, Ted was once again brought back into the Church as the second-in-command under Herbert Armstrong, and in the late 1970s Herbert even placed him in charge of the day-to-day running and governance of the Church, although Herbert maintained theoretical over-all control over the Work from his home in Tucson, Arizona.

In his book *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, John Tuit, one-time member of the Worldwide Church of God on the east coast wrote: "The whole period of turmoil actually had its start around 1968,

after the death of Herbert Armstrong's wife Loma in 1967. It was at this time that Stanley R. Rader began to assume a more prominent position as an advisor to Herbert Armstrong." Tuit points out that Rader had been a non-member and employ of the Church as an accountant and legal counselor. He goes on, "It was during this period, starting in 1968, when the massive building program was embarked upon, including the commitment for the elaborate Ambassador Auditorium. This also marked the beginning of Herbert Armstrong's visits to political leaders around the world. . . ." (p.23).

By 1974, however, many of the problems in the Church came to a frightful head. The cover-up of Ted's promiscuous behavior, challenges on the divorce and remarriage doctrine, healing questions, voting, birthdays, make up -- these and other questions began to be discussed freely among the ministry. When Herbert was slow to change, and refused to own up to the cover-up of his son's sins, ministers throughout the country bolted the Church and began their own "Associated Churches of God," led by Ken Westby. As the years went by, however, those churches became very "disassociated," and the movement fell flat.

Meanwhile, to nip the rebellion in the bud, Herbert Armstrong convoked a ministerial conference to discuss the hot topics of dispute, and to the amazement of many, certain changes began to be made. The divorce doctrine, which had split up many homes and ruined many marriages, was thrown overboard, with the announcement that marriages "in the world" were not "valid" in God's sight in the first place. Make up was accepted as all right for women in moderation, voting in local elections was allowed, and doctors were no longer regarded as the servants of Satan the devil. To stem the loss of members, and to confront the issues which were being used to lead members out of the Church, the ministerial conference made many discreet changes in those doctrines which appeared to be the most sensitive -- or "dangerous." It appeared the Church was willing to admit it was wrong, and to change! Thus many people who might have been tempted to "jump ship" to the new churches being formed decided to stay with the Worldwide Church of God, which still seemed to be doing the Work of God.

Nevertheless, the liberalizing tendencies which began to dominate the Church, in many areas, seemed to cause the Church to go from one extreme in doctrine to another -- from one

ditch alongside the road to the opposite ditch. In many areas, the Church continued watering down the truth of God on many major points. Controversy continued on the healing doctrine, which still remained a bugaboo for thousands, with doctors and medicines seeming to be anathema to true faith in the eyes of many members and ministers. But the divorce doctrine, with the changes fostered by Herman L. Hoeh, became a "can of worms," as soon virtually anything went, and long-time church members began divorce proceedings against their spouses. Even marriages performed "in the Church," by bona-fide Church ministers, ended

in divorce, with the separated partners then regarded as free to marry any one else they chose, so long as they were "in the Church."

At this time Herbert Armstrong did not want to be considered a religious leader in the eyes of world leaders. He began to envision how he could present the gospel of the Kingdom of God without calling it the gospel -- to put a religious message in totally secular terms. Instead of speaking about "God's law," he began preaching about the "way of give versus the way of get." Apparently not fully realizing how he was actually "watering down the gospel," and adulterating the plain truth of God, by using such innocuous terms, he began to focus his preaching in meetings and banquets around the world on the topics of "give versus get," and the need for "a strong hand from somewhere" to save mankind from extinction. He ceased to mention the name of Christ at all! Apparently he completely forgot or put out of mind the admonition of Christ Himself who said: "Whosoever therefore shall be ASHAMED OF ME and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ASHAMED, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Rather than calling himself a servant of the living God, Herbert Armstrong began referring to himself as an "Ambassador for world peace." He founded the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, a secular organization to give him credence in the eyes of the world, so he could appear NON-RELIGIOUS, with a non-religious message. He was afraid the world leaders did not want to hear a message of religion, so he changed it to a secularized version of human philosophy -- his own philosophy of the laws of success (not mentioning "God" at all), and the "give versus get" philosophy of life.

Corruption in Publishing Work

The Church of God was clearly embarking across uncharted waters, into unknown seas, with this "new thrust" of the Work. The Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (known as AICF), began to publish a secular magazine called QUEST. It brought top-flight entertainers and musicians to the stage of the Ambassador Auditorium, which had been dedicated to "The Great God" when it was built with church members contributions, to perform secular Hollywood style performances. Soon, what occurred was that inside the "House of God" dance troupes danced in risqué and sensuous manners, bringing shame upon God's House.

The "new thrust" in the "Work" also created a new publishing house called Everest House, and hired secular publishers and editors to run it out of New York City. The gospel of Jesus Christ was nowhere to be found in any of these new endeavors, yet they were highly touted as the new direction GOD was leading the Work! Members were encouraged to sell subscriptions to *Quest* magazine, and sales-stands were put in various state and county fairs across the country,

as well as in the lobbies of Feast of
Tabernacles' sites across the country..

The gospel of Jesus Christ was buried -- no longer out front in the forefront of the Work. Even the PLAIN TRUTH magazine became secularized and worldly in content. Strong religious articles were banned. The Church had begun to compromise with the world; rather than rebuke the world with God's end-time warning message, the Church had been overcome with the influences of the world and Satan's devious deceptions. The first issue of *Quest* magazine in March/April 1977 featured an article on the football coach Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers. The article contained obscenities, blasphemies and outright profanity -- filthy language which would not be becoming for a Christian. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," the apostle Paul commanded (Eph.4:29); now the Worldwide Church of God was responsible for sponsoring that very thing in a slick, full-color magazine!

Another article showed a picture of a man with a serpent entwined around his leg, and in the background the upper portions of a man and woman, with the woman being totally entwined by a serpent. The accompanying fictitious story was about an inventor who invented a stool-less cat which was hailed worldwide. The final article in the first issue was "Build Your Courage in Three Easy Lessons" -- the final lesson being an exercise in "meditation," where the reader was to empty his mind, relax, see himself descending a staircase into a "Place of Courage" where he was to meet "Mother Courage" or "Father Courage" or the "Spirit of Courage." This kind of meditation technique, emptying the mind, is very dangerous spiritually, and is condemned in the Word of God. An empty mind is the devil's playground. People who empty their minds in playing with Eastern medication techniques are exposing their minds to the influence of Satanic demons -- wicked spirits (Eph.6:10-17). Such an article in a publication of the Worldwide Church of God was nothing short of blasphemous! Yet at that time when Church members complained, ministers told them, "Don't worry about it; its not for us to get upset over. Mr. Armstrong has been called as God's apostle and he certainly knows what is going on."

Members of the Church working in the Ambassador Press who were involved in editing and publishing the magazine were sick at heart, and at least one began to suffer from ulcers, as he faced this diabolical situation.

Was Herbert Armstrong aware? Did he even care any more? During those days, in 1977, the Work of God was descending into apostasy, and Church ministers remained BLIND to what was occurring. Ministers, fearful of losing their cushiony salaries, were fearful of rocking the boat. Gradually an attitude and teaching of BLIND OBEDIENCE became the standard "modus operandi" in the Church, and nobody questioned what was done lest they be disfellowshipped and put out of the Church.

John Tuit in his book quoted previously, declared, "This trend into publishing a secular magazine under the auspices of a secular foundation operated by the Church was an activity totally in conflict with the purposes, beliefs and teachings of the Church. If God would not allow Herbert Armstrong to do anything that would harm the work, as he had always said, then what was going on here? Either God was a hypocrite or Herbert Armstrong was wrong" (p.53).

Even worse than *Quest* magazine, however, were many of the books published by Everest House, the Church's new publishing venture. One of their books told homosexual couples how to live together more cheaply. Another, *Danse Macabre* written by horror-fiction writer Stephen King, contained hundreds of blasphemies, profanities, cursing and swearing, obscenities, and connected the names of God and Jesus Christ with the most foul and depraved human activities. Yet the Word of God clearly says, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, BLASPHEMY, FILTHY COMMUNICATION out of your mouth" (Col.3:8). By being responsible for *Quest* magazine and Everest House publishing, the very Church of God was guilty of BLASPHEMY!

Truly, after the death of his wife Loma, Herbert Armstrong had begun to go astray, and to depart from the foundations of the truth of God. He no longer had his wife to steer him in the right direction. He wouldn't listen to his son, or ministers under his authority. He began preaching a "non-gospel" in his journeys around the world, under the influence of the mysterious Stanley Rader. Rader, baptized finally in mid-1975 in a bathtub in Hong Kong by Herbert Armstrong, began to assert more and more manipulative influence over the aging octogenarian.

What does the apostle Paul, in the inspired Word of God, have to say about those who preach a "different" gospel, such as the gospel of "Give Versus Get"? Paul wrote, by the Spirit of God, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ UNTO ANOTHER GOSPEL: Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL unto you than that which we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you that that ye have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED" (Gal.1:6-9).

Paul went on, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet PLEASED MEN, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal.1:10). Herbert Armstrong had begun to attempt to "please men," and no longer thundered the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the nations as a witness. He no longer lifted up his voice like a trumpet to show the nations their sins (Isa.58:1). He had become a muted trumpet, a sweet song, a pleasant harmonica, a soft lullaby on the violin.

The Apostasy Grows

In 1977 at age 85 Herbert Armstrong married a woman less than half his age, Ramona Martin, the erstwhile assistant of Stanley Rader. Armstrong thought he fell in love with this woman, although others have suspected that it was Stanley Rader who provided this temptation for him, and not God. Before marrying Ramona, Armstrong went to the Otopeni Clinic in Bucharest, Romania. According to Ted Armstrong, this was in order to receive treatments for sexual rejuvenation, but it didn't do any good. During this time, Ted was vehemently against the marriage, causing Herbert Armstrong to violently proclaim his anger against his son. Waiting in the wings, to pick up the pieces after any fall out, was Stanley Rader. As it tamed out, however, Ted agreed to perform the wedding, to his father's delight, and to Rader's chagrin and silent fury.

Ted said that when Rader walked in and found out he was performing the ceremony, "He was furious. My wife saw it, I saw it we felt it, it was just blazing anger" (Tuit, p.58).

Later on, Herbert Armstrong began to spend tens of thousands of dollars for furs and jewelry for Ramona, while Church Sabbath school programs went begging for funds, and powerful, exhortative Co-worker letters went out from headquarters talking about the desperate need for money to complete the Great Commission!

Sadly, that which had begun as a true modern-day remnant of the Church of God was rapidly becoming a religious cult following a strident, volatile aging octogenarian. More and more members began to see that leadership of the Church at the top was corrupt. Herbert Armstrong was paying for large, ornate and lavish banquets in cities around the world, where he would give his mild message of the "give gospel." He would give expensive gifts of Steuben crystal to political figures in order to interview them for a few moments, get his picture taken with them, and publish the pictures on the cover of the PLAIN TRUTH. While Church members were scrimping and saving to send in their last few dollars to the Work, Herbert Armstrong was proudly telling senior Ambassador students invited to his home for dinner that the place settings and dinnerware on his table was worth \$125,000!

How did Herbert Armstrong get in to visit Prime Ministers and leading heads of state around the world? When the apostle Paul was brought before Governors Felix and Festus, it was as a prisoner in chains, making his defense (Acts 24-25). When he appeared before king Agrippa, it was still as a prisoner (Acts 26). Yet he gave testimony before kings, and was not afraid to mention Christ, and the whole story of his dramatic conversion. He was not ashamed of Christ. But Herbert Armstrong worked his way into the inner sanctums of world leaders through the services of the mysterious Osamu Gotoh.

According to *Ambassador Report*, a publication which "watched" the goings-on at the Worldwide Church of God, and reported on them, Gotoh's own expense account eventually reached \$100,000. While making arrangements for Armstrong to visit with the high and mighty of the world, on June 6, 1975 Gotoh was apprehended at Los Angeles International Airport carrying a large amount of undeclared jewelry. If tried and convicted of a crime, he could have received up to five years in jail and a fine of \$50,000. Soon after this, he was out of the United States and out of reach of Federal agents. He was later engaged by the Church once again, and released in 1977 for obscure reasons.

It was in 1977 that a 92 page issue of *Ambassador Report* came out financed by the savings of former Ambassador students and employees. It laid bare the bizarre truth about many of the profligate activities of Garner Ted Armstrong (the lead article was "In Bed with Garner Ted", an account by an supposedly anonymous former Ambassador college coed of her personal tryst with Ted Armstrong), the failed prophecies of Herbert Armstrong, computer snooping on members' tithing records, and many other articles on the financial improprieties, corruption, and bizarre antics of Worldwide leaders. Although it never brought about the "bombshell" publicity that was expected, it did open a lot of eyes to the truth.

Meanwhile, the political infighting in the Church was reaching new levels of sophistication.

In January 1978 it was announced that Worldwide Advertising, a company associated with Stanley Rader, would no longer be the advertising agency for the Church television programs. With this step Ted Armstrong had begun to "dismantle Stanley Rader's financial empire," says John Tuit (*ibid.*, p.85). It wasn't long before Rader's counter-punch came. It was announced by Ted Armstrong that the campus at Pasadena would be closed and the college moved to Big Sandy. Shortly after this Stanley Rader announced that the Big Sandy campus was going to be closed, and all college operations would continue at Pasadena.

The Battle for Control

Writes John Tuit of this struggle for supremacy, "A battle was in full swing. Garner Ted had begun to chip away at Rader's influence and control, and Rader was retaliating. There was no way after twenty years that Rader was going to let go of the Worldwide Church of God . . . Rader and Garner Ted had locked horns, and Rader was determined that this would be the last time" (p.87-88).

In May 1978 Michael Germano, dean of Ambassador College in Pasadena, at Rader's instructions, announced that Ambassador College at both campuses was to be closed. Rumors were flying all over the place. When Ted tried to call his father, he couldn't get through to him. The suspicion arose that Rader was

blocking off all contact between father and son. Meanwhile, an announcement was made that Ted was being placed on a leave of absence. On May 21, Herbert Armstrong announced in a letter that he himself would soon be back on the air, making new radio and television programs. In a letter dated May 19 to his son Ted, Herbert Armstrong accused his son of not agreeing with the way Christ had led him, and of claiming he would have done things a different way. After pointing out how Ted was changing ways and personnel over to his own way, Herbert concluded, "I have had to step in and take over the reins completely to save the Church of God and His WORK. You, of course, will not agree with any of this, as you have never agreed with your human father."

Why did Herbert Armstrong suddenly begin attacking his son in May, 1978? In a meeting with the attorneys who were about to bring litigation against the Church, Robert Kuhn, a high level official of the Church, declared, "Mr. Armstrong is a total dictator, calling himself God's apostle, and Rader controls the entire business . . . Even Ted had no knowledge of the finances of the Church. He was just used as a front, but actually had no real authority, except for a short period of time when he began to assert himself.. Then, Rader apparently threatened Mr. Armstrong, and last May, Ted was thrown out. His own father sacrificed him for Rader."

At this point Robert Kuhn was asked what Rader had on Herbert that he could control him in such a way. Kuhn replied: "I'm not sure, but there are rumors of sexual compromise, in addition to vast expenditures of money. . ." (Tuit, *ibid*, p. 153).

In the same May 21 letter Herbert boasted of being scheduled to co-host a charity event with Queen Elizabeth II, thus showing members his own growing importance. However, the London *Sunday Times* of July 2, 1978, declared, "Buckingham Palace have never heard of the man, 86-year-old Herbert Armstrong, head of the California based Worldwide Church of God. And the

Queen will not even be at Thursday's premier in London . . ." The producer of the film being premiered went on to say that although Armstrong and Rader were invited to the event as "just ordinary guests," there was never any question of their "co-hosting" the event.

About this time, Ted Armstrong determined to close Ambassador College in Pasadena, and to transfer the student body to Big Sandy, Texas, and retain the college there. He apparently thought he had his father's approval for this move, but did not discuss it with him personally, choosing to work through others. However, when informed by Ray Wright in the financial office that it would cost millions of dollars to make this move, Herbert Armstrong blew his stack, and stopped the move in its tracks. He was so incensed that he seized control of the operations of the Church back from his son.

When Ted subsequently went before the world's press to explain his own side of the story, his father disfellowshipped him for insubordination and rebellion. Soon after this, Herbert Armstrong proclaimed that the Church of God was in "MORTAL DANGER" and that he was calling for a day of "FASTING AND PRAYER." On July 26 he wrote to his son Ted informing him that he had disobeyed blatantly his father, contacted the press contrary to his father's authority, and therefore Herbert was forced to

"MARK YOU before the Church and to inform you that you are forthwith disfellowshipped from the Church and terminated from all authority and employment . . ." (Tuit, p.94).

This breach was only to grow wider over the ensuing months, and Ted began building his own Church, the Church of God, International, as a separate Church. It appeared that any reconciliation with his father was impossible under the existing circumstances. From Ted's point of view, Stanley Rader appeared to have won the battle for the control of the mind of Herbert Armstrong.

From this time on, it seemed as if Herbert Armstrong's articles in the Church publications were all focused on disparaging Ted, accusing him of rebellion against authority, and writing about Church Government. Herbert Armstrong claimed he was God's ONLY apostle, and the head of God's ONLY one true Church, and therefore Ted was an apostate, in rebellion against God and in the clutches of Satan.

At this time Herbert Armstrong began writing articles contradicting one particular long-established Church doctrine, that all the apostles were of equal rank, and he began teaching the Catholic doctrine of the primacy of Peter. All of a sudden, since Ted had begun his own competing Church, Herbert Armstrong began teaching that Peter was, as the Catholic Church claims, the true successor of Jesus Christ, and the chief or head of all the apostles.

He was claiming that God only has ONE servant on the earth at a given time, despite the fact that the prophets Ezekiel, Daniel and Jeremiah were all contemporary, and none was "in charge" of the others. In a later generation, the prophets Malachi, Zechariah and Haggai were also contemporaries, but each was called to serve God independently of the others, and no single one was "in charge," as Herbert liked to say.

Meanwhile, the degeneration and corruption in the Worldwide Church of God continued, and speeded up. Charges were made that millions of dollars were being spent just to entertain world leaders. The charge was made that Osamu Gotoh spent several hundred thousand dollars in one year in a questionable manner. Mark Armstrong claimed that his grandfather, Herbert, spent over \$200,000 of his own money to buy furs and jewels for Ramona, and

then reimbursed himself from the Church's first tithe fund, which money is supposed to go for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations (Matt.24:14).

Mark also claimed, speaking to the Tuits, that his grand-father Herbert Armstrong had a severe drinking problem. This same fact was pointed out to me by Benjamin Chapman, son-in-law of Herbert Armstrong. In fact, Dale Hampton, a former minister of the Church, who began an alcohol dependency program among Church members, patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous, used to explain to those on the program, "Herbert Armstrong is an alcoholic," even as he himself was. This statement got him fired shortly thereafter. But Mark Armstrong went on, "He tells the Church people to drink in moderation, and for years he's been getting himself smashed just about every night."

When asked if Armstrong really gets drunk, Mark replied, "O yeah, I've even helped carry him to his bed when he was just plain wiped out from too much booze" (Tuit, p..98-99).

After Garner Ted Armstrong began the competing Church of God, International, leadership of the Worldwide Church of God became even more paranoid and fearful. Authoritarianism and dictatorial rule became the method of controlling the Church membership. They were forbidden to visit Ted's Church, talk with its members, or receive or read "dissident literature," including non-religious publications which reported negatively on church activities, such as *Ambassador Report*. Anyone violating these bans was subject to immediate disfellowshipment and being cast out of the Church, and even being "marked" publicly as someone who must be avoided by all God's people.

Mindless, blind loyalty was the new mark of most Worldwide members. When you entered the church, you "checked your brain at the door." Independent thinking became increasingly rare in the Worldwide Church of God.

Massive Corruption and Misspending of Tithes

In a document entitled "Executive Expense Analysis" for March 3, 1978, among the itemized expenses listed were:

Henry Cornwall \$51,094.13
spent in Japan (most of it to the Imperial Hotel and Japan Airlines).

Stanley Rader \$51,431.14 \$22,571.19 to the Hotel Athene
in Paris, \$1,536 to Wilshire Travel, the rest of it mostly for his own use, apparently, including expenses on his home in Beverly Hills, utilities, landscaping, mortgage, and his Tucson home.

This information was sent anonymously to John Tuit and became a major portion of the basis for a lawsuit which he instigated against the Worldwide Church of God leadership. Tuit says, "I was outraged when I saw these figures." How, he wondered, could personal living expenses be included in payments made by a non-profit corporation or religious institution? Such payments seemed to him highly out of order and probably illegal. But this was to prove to be merely the tip of the iceberg.

During the Feast of Tabernacles in 1978, reports began to circulate that Ray Wright, vice-president for financial affairs for the Church, had embezzled \$219,000 of Church funds, illegally diverting them to Environmental Plastics, Inc., of Dallas, a company he owned with Robert Kuhn. Although this was revealed in the "Pastor's Report," a Church publication sent to ordained ministers and other church leaders, no disciplinary action was ever taken against Wright. After exposure and humiliation, he reportedly repaid the portion of those funds which had gone to his own company. But he was never reprimanded, fired, or otherwise punished by the Church officials for whom he worked. The whole matter was "covered up." What really happened, and what was the basis for the alleged illegal diversions of church funds?

The true story is as intriguing as it is convoluted. In the lawsuit against the Church instigated by the Tuits and others, Ray Wright appeared before the same attorneys who interviewed Robert Kuhn. As vice-president for the financial affairs division of the Work, he was in a position to possess a great deal of knowledge. Wright began by mentioning that Osamu Gotoh often would take \$25,000 cash out the door in his briefcase, money given to him by the Work, yet Wright never understood what it was for. When he brought it to Rader's attention, he was told the money was for foreign campaign expenses, whatever that meant, and that he was not to ask any more questions.

Wright then went on to show how hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent at various places such as the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem, to send a world court justice to Disneyland, with expenses listed as Gucci, Cartier, Harrod's, Patek, Phillippe, Steuben Glass. All these, Wright explained, were handled on the special executive checking account, which handled Herbert Armstrong and Stan Rader's salaries.

Tuit writes: "Wright continued, talking almost nonstop. He commented that even Alfred Hitchcock couldn't dream up a story as this true one. He told how money had been spent on personal homes; about executives speculating in precious metals on margin for their own account using Church funds; about an account at the Union Bank of Switzerland that was used to cover margin requirements for speculation in foreign currency. Then, there was the home that Rader had purchased from the Church for \$450,000 with little more than \$100,000 down payment, and with the Church holding the mortgage. He then paid the mortgage loan with money received from the Church to remodel the home. He then sold the home for \$1.8 million dollars, with the Church paying

his capital gains tax for him" (Tuit, p.158). Quite a profit!

Regarding Wright's own financial imbroglio, he explained that Ted Armstrong had told him to begin a secretive investigation of Rader's connections with the Work and his financial involvement, and that Wright had suggested using his own Texas company as a front, through

which they would hire and pay detectives and sleuths to get the facts on Rader. About \$40,000 of the \$219,000 actually went to them, the rest winding up in Wright's company.

Strangely, even though Ted had asked Wright to compile a special report of Rader's spending activities and financial connections with the Church, for some reason Wright, possibly attempting to protect his backside, told Rader at the end of 1977 about his findings. According to Wright, "Rader was shocked. He was absolutely shocked. He went into a rage when he found out what we had done" (p.161).

The attorneys then asked Wright if he thought Ted Armstrong had pure motives in wanting to expose Rader. Wright answered,

"I really don't know. But Garner Ted has been accused many times of excessive spending also. He lived quite well with his several homes and jet planes. There have been many stories widely circulated regarding Ted's gambling activities. One that comes to mind is that the Church had to bail him out of a massive debt in Las Vegas. He likes to play blackjack and has been known to drop a lot of money at the blackjack tables . . ." (p.164).

Wright was also asked why Herbert Armstrong would allow Rader to come out on top of his own son -- if Rader had anything on Armstrong.

Wright responded:

"Well, of course Armstrong has spent more than his share of money, too. Rader is the guy who knows where every penny has gone. He has threatened Mr. Armstrong many times that if he were ever let go he would tell the world everything he knows. . . His knowledge seems to go far beyond money. A lot of the hold he has over Herbert Armstrong seems to center around Armstrong's own weaknesses. He has his drinking problem that just leads to all other types of problems" (p.164-165).

Raymond Wright went on to state that Floyd Lochner, who often accompanied Armstrong on his travels, as his physical therapist, claims to have made several tapes of Armstrong revealing very intimate things to him. Wright went on, "And then I understand that there were many sexual sins, but I don't know the details about it. I would say that the validity of all this is confirmed by the fact that Dr. Lochner is on a salary from the college of about \$25,000 a year. He has absolutely no duties and no responsibilities. Its strictly a no-show job" (*ibid*).

During this time, Stanley Rader appeared to be the new "crown prince" who would inherit the mantle of leadership over the Church in the event of Herbert Armstrong's death. He seemed to be gaining the upper hand. Herbert Armstrong's fear of him was evident in his conversations with Wayne Cole, the evangelist then over Church administration. Herbert Armstrong once told Wayne that Rader was "the most powerful person in the Work now." He told him that he knew he needed to remove him from all executive and administrative

responsibility. However, before any of this could transpire, a crisis struck the Church which was totally unexpected.

The Receivership Crisis

On January 3, 1979, the Attorney General of the state of California raided the Ambassador College campus and Headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, and put the Church in receivership, demanding access to all Church financial records. In issuing the order for the receivership, Judge Jerry Pacht called the Worldwide Church of God situation a "bowl of spiders." The Receiver, Judge Weismann, was to take charge of the day-by-day operations of the Church and investigate all allegations of financial impropriety.

However, the state officials and attorneys met with a total lack of cooperation. The Church was shocked at the action of the state of California, and Church members in Pasadena and nearby areas rallied to the defense of the Church. As most viewed it, the Church was under attack. Satan was trying to destroy the Church of God. The purpose of the Receivership appeared to be to remove both Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader from effective control of the Church, and to place it in the hands of different leadership -- a board of directors.

Herbert Armstrong, the head of the Church, who believed and taught that God Himself chose him to be the head of the Church, the apostle general and leader, when he was informed of the raid by the authorities, and the occupation of offices, reacted with fury and anger, and fought back with a tenacity and fierceness that few expected. To fight the take-over, Armstrong mended his fences with Stan Rader, and called upon the expertise of Rader, his legal counsel for many years, to defend the Church

leadership, particularly himself and Rader. The decision was made to fight vigorously the state attack, and not submit to the authorities. The defense of the Church was based on the doctrines of separation of Church and State, and the constitutional amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion. This attack seemed to be a direct strike against freedom of religion, and a violation of the doctrine of the separation of Church and state.

To most members of the Church, the issues seemed clear cut. Perhaps Rader was guilty of misusing funds, and taking advantage of the Church; but Herbert Armstrong accepted him, so that settled the issue, for most members. Even if Herbert himself had misspent funds, most Church members felt that that was between him and God, and was not their responsibility or concern. Most felt that once they sent their tithes in to the Church, their responsibility ended and the Church officials would be held accountable by God for how they used or misused the money.

At this point in time, the Church decided to draw attention to its unprecedented and unique predicament, and fought the state Receivership by every means available. They held Church meetings in the Hall of Administration, to keep out the state officials. The Church directed members to send all tithes and offerings to Herbert Armstrong in Tucson, Arizona, instead of Pasadena, thus hoping to shortly bankrupt the Receivership and make them run out of money, and keep Church funds out of their hands.

Although the Receiver was ordered by the Court not to interfere with Church doctrine, or

ecclesiastical matters, one wonders how such an order could possibly be followed since one of the major doctrines of the Church involves Church government coming down from God through the apostle Herbert Armstrong? Herbert, as a total dictator and ruler, had the final say on all matters concerning the Church. Therefore, to circumvent him would be to violate Church doctrine and destroy the Church, as it was then constituted!

But those behind the attack on the Church, including John Tuit and others, had already agreed that Herbert Armstrong had to go, that he was himself essentially responsible for the sad state of affairs in the Church. According to them, he was responsible for Stan Rader being where he was, and for Rader's nefarious influence and power. To get rid of Rader, who was mistrusted and feared by many, if not despised, they felt they had also to get rid of Herbert Armstrong.

In view of the real aim of the Receivership, it seems absurd to think that anyone would believe that under the circumstances Herbert Armstrong would not fight back with all his might and energy to protect his office and leadership. He may have been old, but he was not senile or weak of will. His own position as apostle was at stake. He had been the one who had built up the Church. He had endured for over fifty years as its leader and

ruler. The PLAIN TRUTH magazine was his creation, over fifty years ago. Why, then, should he quietly depart, and agree to ride into the sunset, with no power or authority left?

Herbert Armstrong may have made many mistakes, and have had many weaknesses, both of the flesh and of the spirit, but he was nobody's fool. Nor was he a coward, fearful of a fight! He had always been a fighter. He often said anyone sitting in a position of authority had to be capable of maintaining his authority, and not allow anyone to remove him from power, or else he wasn't worthy of it in the first place. He often referred to Satan's attempt to displace God from His throne over the universe, and reminded his listeners of the fact that God was able to retain His power and defeat Satan. Thus when Satan attacked the Church of God, through the Receivership imposed by the state, Armstrong rallied the Church behind him in this "Church Versus State" battle.

The Receivership crisis became a major television news story, breaking nationwide, as the Church members demonstrated, and picketed the Courthouse in Los Angeles, and occupied the Hall of Administration.

During this time Wayne Cole, David Antion, and Ben Chapman, evangelists, and Robert Kuhn, were disfellowshipped, allegedly for being part of a Satanic conspiracy to destroy the Church. Apparently their sin was in wanting to co-operate with the state of California agencies involved in the Receivership, and to take the consequences. Perhaps they agreed that Stanley Rader needed to be removed, and Herbert Armstrong was no longer capable of exercising good judgment to govern the Church.

At any rate, evangelist Roderick Meredith announced their disfellowshippment to the Church. It is possible that Wayne Cole, David Antion, and Robert Kuhn were in error in their suggestion to Herbert Armstrong that he should go along with the Receivership and state action. If he had, there is little doubt that Armstrong himself would have been removed, and also little doubt that other facts might have come to the surface which he did not want. Stanley Rader might have

used such a decision to publicize his alleged "knowledge" of Herbert Armstrong's indiscretions and weaknesses, of which he may have had first-hand knowledge, including sexual encounters on his many trips to Asia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and so forth.

Stanley Rader had been Herbert Armstrong's confidant and travel companion. If Herbert had cooperated with the Receivership officials, Stanley Rader might have been greatly threatened, and since he had information that Herbert did not desire to have made public, Herbert undoubtedly saw that to "cooperate" would have been like committing "suicide," and he would have been the loser all around.

During the Receivership crisis, Garner Ted Armstrong spoke out in an interview with the Dallas *Morning News*. He declared, "I

can't tell you how many around-the-world-tickets were paid from Church funds and slipped to Japanese officials in return for getting Church officials into the inner circle of the country. I'm talking about tens of thousands of dollars in trips alone."

Meanwhile, Church attorneys defended Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader, saying in court, ". . . is this the beginning of the State telling the Pope what kinds of robes he can wear? Or that he should not live in such splendor in the Vatican?" Attorney Browne for the Church later said of Armstrong's position as head of the Church, "He sits there as the Pope does."

One of the documents brought out during the trial was the contract of employment between Stanley Rader and the Church. Dated July 30, 1976, the contract stated that Rader was to receive \$200,000 a year for acting as chief advisor to Herbert Armstrong for a period of seven years. If his employment were to be terminated for any reason other than his own death or refusal to work, or Herbert Armstrong's incapacity to receive his advice any longer, then he was to receive \$100,000 a year, plus expenses, until the year 2003. Interestingly, this \$3.5 million dollar contract was drawn up by Rader, signed by Armstrong, with the benefit of Rader's advice and counsel, and no outside legal advice or counsel was ever sought. Was Rader padding his own pockets at the expense of the Church? Why did Herbert Armstrong allow it? Rader was in the unique and enviable position of having nobody review his transactions with the Church except Rader himself.

The Battle of Church Versus State

Meanwhile, the Church continued to fight. Armstrong wrote a letter to members, claiming, "Satan has struck his master blow to destroy God's Church. We must now FIGHT as never before, knowing God will also fight our battles for us."

On January 27, 1979, he proclaimed a day of fasting for the entire Church. January 21 there were all-day sit-in demonstrations in the Ambassador Auditorium and various offices around the campus. The next day over 2,400 Church members and families gathered, the buildings were locked tight, and announcements were posted, "Worldwide Church of God Ecclesiastical Services." By January 24 uniformed deputies arrived at the Administration Building and found the doors locked and barred, with Church members inside singing hymns. I remember driving by the Rose Bowl and seeing two hundred riot-equipped deputies and policemen lounging by their cars, waiting to see if they would receive orders to break into the buildings and arrest the

Church members, in this massive Church-State confrontation.

A compromise was reached, and both sides backed down a little. After this, Rader declared, "We are still in a state of all out war. We've been invaded by an army of the State of California." Hillel Chodos, attorney for the relators, working with the

Attorney General, said in court, however, "You cannot perpetrate fraud in the name of religion and then wrap yourself in the flag and call out the name of the First Amendment."

With the Church of God mired in crisis, and Herbert Armstrong being defended on the basis of his authority and position being comparable to the Pope, it is no wonder that thinking members and Christians who followed the on-going suit, began to wonder what was going on -- what had happened to the Church during the 12 years after the death of Loma Armstrong?

John Tuit sagely observed, "It is not difficult to see that a Church which had come so far from false beliefs, which had come into the knowledge of so much truth, which had done as God commanded, had come out of Babylon, was now, through its internal corruption, *GOING RIGHT BACK INTO BABYLON*" (p..247, emphasis mine).

Herbert Armstrong's "About Face"

In 1939 Herbert Armstrong wrote an article entitled "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?" In it he declared that after God divorced ancient Israel, the governments of the world were to continue under Babylonian rule until Christ returns to bring the Kingdom of God. Until that happens, he wrote, there is to be no Church government as a spiritually ordained line of authority. He wrote: "There is not one single HINT in the New Testament of any Church BOARD with authority to rule, to govern, to decide doctrine, or to handle tithes and Church finances (the whole Church)."

He went on, "But there is *NO BIBLE AUTHORITY* for any super-government, or organization with authority over the local congregations!"

Armstrong adds, "How, then, did ORGANIZATION, and the idea of CHURCH GOVERNMENT get into the Church?"

"It came out of *BABYLON!* Spiritual *BABYLON* -- that is, *ROME!* The same as nearly all other false doctrines of Satan."

Centralized Church government began with Pope Leo (440-461 A.D.). Leo I set up an ecclesiastical form of Church government. Said Armstrong, "And thus the very PRINCIPLE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT becomes the *IMAGE OF THE BEAST!*"

Stirred to fiery indignation, he wrote back in 1939, "The whole thing [Church government] is FALSE! It is NOT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE! It is part of *BABYLON!* Those who are IN, and MEMBERS OF such an organized Church government, submitting to doctrines declared by unscriptural boards as a fellowship test are IN *BABYLON* and actually worshippers of THE *IMAGE OF THE BEAST!* And God is calling us, HIS people OUT of *BABYLON* today, before

it is too late -- before the PLAGUES fall!

'Brethren," he entreated, "let us have the courage to accept the TRUTH, and to COME OUT."

Strange, isn't it, how Herbert Armstrong, who had so much truth of God in 1939, himself later instituted centralized authority and the very type of government he condemned in 1939, particularly after his son was disfellowshipped in 1978, and during the confrontation of the Church-State crisis in 1979!

BACK TO BABYLON!

Writes John Tuit, "In 1939, Armstrong was calling people out of spiritual Babylon. Forty years later, Armstrong is leading people RIGHT BACK INTO SPIRITUAL BABYLON. Just as the Church of God at Rome, in the first few centuries after Christ, fell into total paganized Babylonish worship, Herbert Armstrong, instead of remembering his early teachings, has STRAYED FROM HIS WAYS AND LED THIS END-TIME CHURCH OF GOD IN ITS FIRST STEPS ON A RETURN TO BABYLON" (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p.250-251).

"Return to Babylon!"

The incredible has happened! The unbelievable has occurred! The Worldwide Church of God has gone full circle. Departing from Babylon in the 1930s through the 1960s, in the 1970s and 1980s it has begun a long journey back into the heartland of BABYLON! The process was begun by Herbert Armstrong himself by his own personal weaknesses personal sins and apparent corruption, especially during the latter years of his life, after the benign influence of his wife had ended, when she died in 1967. The movement back into Babylon was augmented by his powerful change in the Church doctrine of government, claiming that he was God's one and only true representative on earth, and all ministers had to answer to him. Dire consequences occur when men claim DIVINE authority, and then misuse it! "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," an old proverb states.

The movement from spiritual cleanliness to spiritual degeneration and degradation was spurred by personal weaknesses and sins. When men sin, they become cut off from God (Isa.59:1-2). False teaching about Church authority leads to many more miseries in the Church. The return of the Church to Babylon was further augmented by the influence of Stanley Rader and others, who, in their pursuit of money and wealth, apparently used the Church resources to fill their own pockets. The backwards journey was aided and abetted by the immorality of Garner Ted Armstrong and others, who themselves compromised with the truth, sinned grievously, and willingly fed themselves off the feeding trough of the Church, living high off the fat of the sheep.

But to further solidify the return to Babylon, Herbert Armstrong did something during the Receivership crisis which virtually guaranteed that the Church would only continue to degenerate spiritually, and thus fulfill Bible prophecy that the final, end-time Church would be the Laodicean Church of God! What did he do?

During the Receivership crisis, on September 217, 1979, Herbert Armstrong ordained the three men who led the fight against the State of California as evangelists -- Stanley Rader, Ellis LaRavia, and Joseph Tkach.

In 1974 Mr. and Mrs. Jim Fox of the San Jose Church of God were in a restaurant of the Hilton Hotel in Madrid, Spain. Mr. Fox saw Osamu Gotoh and Stanley Rader at a nearby table talking with a woman, writing something on a piece of paper and handing it to her, and then heard one of them say to her as she left that they would see her later that evening. Suspicious, Fox wondered if the woman were a house prostitute. The bartender confirmed his suspicion. After discussing the matter with his wife, Fox then approached the woman himself, determined that she was indeed a prostitute, found out her price, and made "tentative" arrangements to see her later that evening as a ruse. Upon returning to the states, Fox discussed the matter with his minister who told him it would be taken care of by proper authorities, and not to mention it to anyone else. However, nothing was ever done about the matter, and the Foxes, greatly disillusioned, and shattered by the experience, dropped out of the Worldwide Church of God.

Herbert Armstrong himself revealed to David Robinson, a former minister in the Church, the fact that he kept a masturbation log, a diary where he recorded each incident when he masturbated and the details of each occurrence. An intimate confidant of Armstrong, Robinson was unnerved by the revelation, but maintained his faith in God. He also had heard of Armstrong's alleged encounters with boys in Europe, and of alleged secretly obtained photographs held by Rader. Armstrong confided to Holly Ruiz the fact that he had loved a young Filipino girl and brought her back to the United States, and set her up in an apartment in Pasadena; but when he discovered she had another boyfriend, he sent her back to the Philippines. Albert J. Portune, a former evangelist in the Church, told me he knew of two young Filipino girls whom Herbert Armstrong had brought to Pasadena, and set up in an apartment, in the early or mid 1970s.

There is no doubt that Floyd Lochner possesses information about Herbert Armstrong that perhaps nobody else has. But he has said that he will not reveal it to anybody unless he determines that Christ wants it revealed. Said Lochner, as quoted by John Tuit: "If He wants it revealed, there are ways He can get it revealed. Even with all the information I have I don't think I can take the prerogative of revelation of all that I know" (Tuit, p.258). Of course, some might consider \$25,000 a year retirement pay to be a substantial inducement in itself to maintain silence.

Says Tuit: "Lochner indicated that he had information of moral misconduct for at least a ten-year period. This would, again, seem to fit in with the statements made by Garner Ted that everything seemed to change drastically in a wrong way *after his mother died*" (p.259, emphasis mine).

What really happened to Herbert Armstrong, that in his latter years he allowed the Church of God to fall into a condition of growing apostasy?

Even as Satan provoked David to number Israel, leading to great calamity and a grievous

plague which killed 70,000 men and women (I Chron.21:1-14), standing at his right hand, so it appears that Satan began to "tempt" Herbert Armstrong, in many ways, after his first wife Loma died. Men around him flattered his ego. Nobody stood up to him, or had the nerve to disagree with him. He was surrounded by sycophants and "toadies." And Satan came amongst them, leading him to drink too much, to succumb to pulls of the flesh, so that he became "compromised" and could have been "blackmailed."

Two thousand years ago Satan was able to deceive and delude most of the original Church of God, causing the vast majority to fall away from the truth and to embrace paganism. Should it be any surprise to us, today, that Satan is still able to pull off such a brilliant coup? Is Satan dead? Has he lost his ability to deceive? Not according to the Word of God! God says that even in the "last days" just before Jesus' return to earth, Satan still is the one who "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev.12:9). In the last days, Paul writes, there shall come "a falling away" or great APOSTASY, with "all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the *LOVE OF THE TRUTH*, that they might be saved" (11 Thess.2:3,10).

Wrote John Tuit in 1981, just seven or eight years ago, "And now through Stanley Rader and his desire for great wealth and power, Satan could work to prey on Armstrong's weaknesses of ego and vanity, turning him from the very ways of God that he had taught so well to others. Through subtle deceptions, the Worldwide Church of God is also now going **RIGHT BACK TO BABYLON**."

"Through moral corruption and the false apostleship of Herbert Armstrong, the Worldwide Church today is every bit as much **IN BABYLON** in spite of the true doctrines that they still may have, as are the traditional Christian churches" (p.288).

Declares John Tuit: "The full part of the Worldwide Church of God in this satanic conspiracy will probably never be known until after Christ returns. However, there can be no doubt that as the leadership of the Church turned from the ways of God, God removed His blessing and Satan was allowed to use the organization in such a way, perhaps as a **TEST OF THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS**. Anyone who remains part of the Worldwide Church of God today is **IN BABYLON**, and would **NOT REMAIN THERE** if they adhered to the scriptural teachings that they should know so well" (p.290, emphasis mine).

John Tuit is right on the mark. Are you still standing, with both feet planted in Babylon? Are you solidly behind the Worldwide Church of God, today, as it continues to embrace Babylonian customs and refuses to grow in grace and new knowledge and revelation from Almighty God?

Still Going Back to Babylon?

Since the death of Herbert Armstrong in January, 1986, and the ending of the Receivership on October 14, 1980, and the ouster of Stanley Rader from Church employment several years ago, one might wonder if the Church of God could possibly have begun to get back on the right track, finally, with the installation of Joseph W. Tkach as the new "Apostle of God" and "Apostle-General of the Worldwide Church of God."

Has the form and system of government in the Worldwide Church of God begun to change for the better since Joseph Tkach took over? Has there really been a new openness, and a new beginning of righteousness? Is there a new spirit of unity, and willingness to question entrenched error, and to change when proven wrong?

The answer, sadly, is "No." Instead, the new leadership, after it achieved power, began to wield the rod of iron to rule Church members harder than even Herbert Armstrong did! Like Solomon's son Rehoboam, the new leaders have exchanged mere whips for scorpions! Many are the horror stories I have heard of sincere, upright members being ruthlessly, cruelly beaten spiritually, abused, and thrust out of the Church for merely questioning various sins or errors of the Church or ministers. The oppression is real. The Satanic doctrine of totalitarian, despotic, dictatorial Church government is growing by leaps and bounds, and the Worldwide Church of God is rapidly becoming a modernized copy of the Roman Catholic Church, in governmental harshness and brutality.

Furthermore, since Joseph Tkach has taken over the Church, the doctrinal changes have become more and more astounding. Today, eleven years after the death of Herbert Armstrong, the Church he built by hard work over fifty years has not only gone back into Babylon in government, and politics, it has rejoined the Babylonish churches of this world in doctrine, belief, and practice! Now the Worldwide Church of God has endorsed Christmas worship, Easter worship, eating of unclean meats, abolished Sabbath observance and Holy Day observance as "laws" of God, and has become for all intents and purposes A TOTALLY PROTESTANT-STYLE CHURCH!

Today, the Worldwide Church of God has become the "DAUGHTER OF BABYLON" (Isaiah 47:1-2).

Although the Church has changed, for the worse, in adopting many PAGAN beliefs, such as the Trinity, and "Born Again" doctrines of Protestants, and has deviated from the TRUTH about the Godhead, the purpose of human life, and has lost all knowledge of Biblical prophecy, in some areas they have refused to admit long-held error.

For example, the Worldwide Church of God has also rejected NEW PROVEN TRUTH on Daniel's 2300 days (write for my booklet on this amazing subject). They have also rejected NEW TRUTH concerning the right day to observe Pentecost.

Thirdly, they have also refused to face up to the fact that they observe Passover at the wrong time, and therefore have been observing it "unworthily" for over fifty years!

These are only a few of the areas where the Worldwide Church of God has plunged over the cliff and into error and sheer apostasy. For other information on their multitudinous errors and doctrinal flaws, write for my articles "Where The Church Went Wrong -- Totalitarianism, Doctrinal Error, and the Rejection of Truth!", "Crisis in the Worldwide Church of God -- the Good, the Bad and the Ugly," "Where Is the LAODICEAN Church?", and "35 Errors of the Worldwide Church of God."

It is time God's people begin to WAKE UP! The Worldwide Church of God has returned to BABYLON in every way! It is now time to do as God says, and COME *OUT* of modern spiritual, religious BABYLON!

God Almighty says, "My people hath been lost sheep: Their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them devoured them . . ." (Jer.50:6-7).

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"

The Almighty God thunders to the people in His Church today, "Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die . . . Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because HE IS WARNED; also thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek.3:20-21).

God Almighty says to His Church, today, and to every minister, and to every member: "REPENT, and TURN YOURSELVES from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. CAST AWAY FROM YOU all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for WHY WILL YE DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?" (Ezek. 18:31-32).

God says, in earnest love and compassion, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the DEATH of the wicked; but that the wicked TURN from his way and live: TURN YE, TURN YE FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS; for *WHY WILL YE DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?*" (Ezek.33:11).

God continues His incredible warning to those who have served Him in the past, who have repented of their sins and been righteous in years gone by -- but who have turned away from the right path, and begun to live in SIN -- "Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall NOT DELIVER HIM in the day of his TRANSGRESSION: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he TURNETH *from his wickedness*; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness *IN THE DAY THAT HE SINNETH*.

"When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he TRUST TO HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, and commit INIQUITY, *all his righteousness shall not be remembered*; but for his INIQUITY that he hath committed, *he shall DIE for it*" (Ezek.33:12-13).

Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God today have the unmitigated gall and audacity to tell members, "You don't have the right to question me!" One minister commanded a member to apologize to another minister who had sinned against her, or else she was "out of the Church!" Thus Satan's system of authority has permeated and infiltrated and infected the entire body of the Worldwide Church of God.

Unfortunately, this terrible spiritual affliction now also afflicts just about ALL of the so-called "off-shoots" that have come out of the Worldwide Church of God! Ministers in these new

"off-shoot" churches still attempt to "lord it over" the brethren, and deal with them from the approach of being a dictator, a king, a tyrant!

In the Worldwide Church of God, and also in the many off-shoots of the Worldwide Church of God, members are no longer urged to "*Prove all things*" (I Thess.5:21). No longer are they encouraged to study the Bible daily, as the Bereans did, to "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES DAILY" to prove whether what the ministers say is the truth or not (Acts 17:11).

Yet, the apostle John commands us, under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, "Beloved, BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT [or every minister!], but TRY [TEST, PROVE, EXAMINE CAREFULLY] THE SPIRITS [or ministers] WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD: because many FALSE PROPHETS [MINISTERS] are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

It is an incredible thing to witness an entire Church of the true Church of God stop growing, become arrested in spiritual growth, and then to begin retrogressing spiritually, and sink into depravity, corruption and wretchedness. No wonder Jesus Christ says to the Laodicean Church, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will SPEW THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and KNOWEST NOT that thou art WRETCHED, and MISERABLE, and POOR, and BLIND, and NAKED [spiritually]; I counsel thee to buy of me gold TRIED IN THE FIRE [of Great Tribulation!], that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: Be ZEALOUS therefore, and REPENT" (Rev.3:14-19).

A more degenerate, corrupt Church Age of the true Church of God has never existed. A more spiritually depraved and morally squalid age, with morals sunk into the cesspool of the world, never before could be found on the face of the earth.

Indeed, the Church of God during this past twenty-two years has RETURNED TO BABYLON! It has gone back into spiritual EGYPT! It has forsaken the fountain of living waters, and gone back to pagan idols, pagan doctrines, and pagan idols! It has embraced the dictatorial ways of the Gentiles, and PAGAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT! It is following in the ways of BAAL, the sun-god, and Semiramis, or Venus, the goddess of SEX WORSHIP!

What does Almighty God command His people to do, in this situation? Should they stay in the Church, hoping and trusting that God will someday bring the leadership to repentance? Is that what God promises? Should they continue tithing to and supporting a Church which has gone awry, astray, and plunged off the tracks?

What does God say?

God commands, "*CEASE, MY SON, TO HEAR THE INSTRUCTION THAT CAUSETH TO ERR FROM THE WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE*" (Prov. 19:27).

God also declares, "BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS: for what fellowship hath RIGHTEOUSNESS with unrighteousness? what communion hath light with DARKNESS? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with IDOLS? for ye are the temple of the living God . . .

"Wherefore COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be ye SEPARATE, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor.6:14-18).

If the minister gets his ire up, and disfellowships you, with fire in his eyes, don't worry about it, but rejoice! For JESUS CHRIST said, "Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall SEPARATE YOU FROM THEIR COMPANY, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. REJOICE ye in that day, and LEAP FOR JOY! for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:22-23).

God's Word makes no bones about it. God doesn't mince words, or quibble, or hem and haw. He is very plain, direct and explicit. God THUNDERS, regarding this modern BABYLONISH system of religious confusion and wickedness, and dictatorial authoritarianism, God shouts, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partaker of her SINS, and that ye receive not of her PLAGUES. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

"How much she hath GLORIFIED HERSELF, and lived deliciously [lavishly, luxuriously, at the expense of the poor flock!], so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall HER PLAGUES come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. 18:4-8).

How about you? Are you ready to come OUT OF BABYLON? Or have you returned to Babylon, along with thousands of others, not fully realizing what has happened?

God's warning message is crystal clear. There can be no doubt that the Worldwide Church of God has plunged into corruption, error and grievous apostasy. It has returned to Babylon, and will suffer all the plagues that will fall upon the Great Whore of Revelation. God commands His true people to come OUT of her, to repent, to be zealous, and to CHANGE THEIR WAYS and to RETURN to Him, and His laws, and His righteousness!

Where does YOUR present Church stand? Where are they located, on the "Road to Babylon"?

What are YOU going to do about it?