

**HOW TO FIND**



**THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD**

The cover image for this booklet reflects the confusion people face in finding the true Church of God. This booklet reveals that one must be called by God to not only find the true Church of God but to then become a part of it—the Church which Jesus Christ established and continues to guide!

This booklet is a free educational service, provided by the “Church of the Eternal God” in the United States of America, in collaboration with the “Church of God, a Christian Fellowship” in Canada and the “Global Church of God” in the United Kingdom.

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## HOW THIS WORK IS FINANCED

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The Ten European Revivals of the Ancient Roman Empire  
The Theory of Evolution—a Fairy Tale for Adults?  
Tithing—Today?  
When and How Will Christ Return?

violation of His timeless health law.

[In applying the spirit of God's health laws to modern times, smoking cigarettes, cigars or pipe; chewing tobacco; consuming illegal mind-altering drugs or drugs leading to addiction; or the *excessive* consumption of alcohol would fall in the same category of prohibited activities].

"Human thinking" of what is right and wrong notwithstanding, God thunders at us through His prophet Isaiah HIS "viewpoint" in a telling prophetic warning for our time:

"I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts; A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face... Who eat swine's flesh And the broth of abominable things [*Margin*: "unclean meats"; *Tanakh*: "unclean things"] is in their vessels... I will not keep silence, but will repay... Your iniquities... "Those who [are]... Eating swine's flesh and the abomination [*Tanakh*: "the reptile"] and the mouse, Shall be consumed together,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 65:2-7; 66:17).

### Genesis 9:3

Genesis 9:3 says that God has given man as “food” “every moving thing that lives” “even as the green herbs.” Some claim that prior to this time, humans did not eat animal meat (compare Genesis 1:29, even though this passage does not specifically prohibit the consumption of meat).

In any event, beginning with Noah, God allowed expressly the consumption of animal meat, which is clean, wholesome and fit for food. The comparison with “green herbs” makes clear that neither unhealthy nor poisonous green herbs were included in God’s permission, nor animal meat which is unclean and unfit for human consumption.

### But Note Genesis 7:2

Please note that just prior to the Flood, Noah had been instructed to take clean and unclean animals into the ark (Genesis 7:2). Did God abolish this distinction right after the Flood?

*Matthew Poole’s Commentary* points out that God’s permission to eat all meat includes “... an exception to be gathered both from the nature of the thing, and from the distinction of clean and unclean beasts, mentioned before and afterwards... [Excluded is also the consumption] of those creatures which either died of themselves, or were killed by wild beasts, which is here forbidden implicitly, and afterwards expressly. See Exodus 22:31 Leviticus 22:8.”

The *Pulpit Commentary* agrees. It quotes the statements in the above-stated commentary with approval and adds: “Though the distinction between unclean and clean animals as to food, afterwards laid down in the Mosaic code (Leviticus 11:1–31), is not mentioned here, it does not follow that it was either unknown to the writer or unpracticed by the men before the Flood.”

This understanding is clearly correct. The opposite interpretation makes no sense, as one would be compelled to say that God gave His people permission *at the time of Noah* to eat unclean animals, only to *revoke that permission at the time of Moses*, when the consumption of unclean animal meat was clearly and expressly prohibited.

### A Timeless Health Law for Humans

God considers the consumption of unclean animals as a SERIOUS

## Introduction

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In a world where there are so many churches who claim to be Christian in belief, but have widely differing views and practices, how can one identify the TRUE Church of God? How can one PROVE which church is teaching the same doctrines that Christ taught?

In this booklet, we will lay out in detail the identifying signs of the TRUE Church of God, as revealed in the Bible. We will limit this discussion to Christian organizations and institutions, as the Bible teaches us that *we can only inherit salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ*, and that there is no salvation in any other religion or religious leader (Acts 4:12).

But even when addressing Christianity alone, we must understand that there are many false concepts, doctrines and administrative practices within the “Christian” world and “organized religion,” which we must avoid.

1 John 4:1, 6 tells us: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets have gone out into the world... We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

The Bible tells us that God’s TRUE Church is not divided. That is, there are no differing ideas and doctrines taught within the same body of believers! Ephesians 4:1–6 tells us that there is “one” body, “one” faith; “one” Spirit; “one” baptism; “one” Lord; and “one” God, and Father of all. Paul adds in Galatians 1:6–9 that there is only “one” gospel message. This is to say, if Church organizations are teaching different concepts about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church of God, baptism and the gospel, then they cannot all be correct.

Even though God’s true Church—the body of Christ (Colossians 1:24)—is a spiritual organism, consisting of all who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is nevertheless physically organized.

Organizations that are divided among themselves need to strive to come to the unity of the faith (Jude 3) and to embrace the unity of the Truth.

It is the responsibility of every Christian to ascertain where the Truth is being upheld and taught; and this can only be accomplished by comparing the teachings and practices of a particular Church organization with the requirements of the Bible. We read in Acts 17:11 about the people in Berea: “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

We do believe that the *Church of the Eternal God and its international affiliates in Canada, the UK and German-speaking areas* are part of the true Church of God. While we are not saying that our organizations comprise the entirety of the Church of God, we are saying that we differ remarkably in many areas from other Church organizations, which all claim to represent true Christianity.

The Bible speaks in Revelation 17 of a world-ruling “fallen” “Christian” Church organization with many “daughter” churches. It also describes, in Revelation 2 and 3, various organizations within the true Church of God, but it also points out the problem areas in many of those groups. Scripture warns us not to join with or remain in an organization that has fallen away from true Christianity; and it also cautions us not to join with or remain in an organization that might even be part of the body of Christ, but which is not practicing and preaching the full Truth.

If any Church claiming to be Christian is in defiance of God’s biblical standards, doctrines and administrative requirements, then the Bible commands us to leave such an organization, once we have discovered and proven the Truth.

Publication Society renders the Hebrew word for “swan” as “horned owl,” while the Jewish *Tanakh* translation states, “white owl.”

### **Mammals**

Regarding mammals, the following are among those that **may be eaten**, as they divide the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud, compare Leviticus 11:3:

Antelope, beef, buffalo, caribou, deer, elk, gazelle, giraffe, goat, hart, lamb, moose, ox, reindeer, sheep, veal.

The following mammals and other land animals **must not be eaten**:

Ape (including gorilla), armadillo, badger, bear [in addition to not having the criteria for clean mammals, bears, as well as cats, have paws, Leviticus 11:27], beaver, camel [even though Hollywood has erroneously portrayed the camel in biblical movies as clean, which could be eaten] cat (including all wild cat species, such as lion, tiger), civet cat, coyote, dog, donkey, elephant, fox, hare, horse, hyena, jackal, kangaroo, llama, monkey, mouse, mule, opossum, rabbit, raccoon, rat, swine (including the boar, peccary and the pig, as well as pig products, such as sausage, pepperoni, hog, bacon, ham, lard and pork), squirrel, weasel, wolf, zebra.

At one time in recent history, some Jews considered the tapir as a clean animal, until it was discovered that it belongs to the pig family. Again, caution is mandated with some listings of uncommon or “exotic” animals.

### ***The Bible Does Not Allow Consumption of Unclean Meat***

Some turn to several Scriptures to “prove” that all animal flesh can be eaten, including frogs, scorpions, snails, snakes, crabs, dogs, horses, skunks, pigs or rats, just to name a few.

The following discussion is in addition to our statements in our free booklet, “Old Testament Laws—Still Valid Today?” in which we explain in both Appendix C and D the meaning of *Mark 7:18–19*; *Acts 10*; *1 Timothy 4:1–5*; and *Hebrews 13:9*, proving that none of these passages allows the consumption of meat from unclean animals.

One *additional* passage, which is sometimes used to prove that we are not obligated any longer to abstain from unclean meat, is Genesis 9:3.



that **may be eaten**, as they have both fins and scales, compare Leviticus 12:9–11:

Anchovy, bass, carp, cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, hardtail, herring, mackerel, mahi-mahi, pike, pollack, red snapper, salmon, sardine, sea bass, snapper, sole, trout, tuna, whitefish.

The following sea creatures and animals, living partly in the water and partly on land, **must not be eaten**:

Alligator, catfish, crocodile, dolphin, eel, jellyfish, octopus, otter, porpoise, seal, shark, shellfish (including clam, crab, lobster, mussel, oyster, scallop and shrimp), squid, sturgeon (including most kinds of caviar), turtle, whale (including whale oil).

Caution is mandated regarding some Jewish publications that list the swordfish as a clean fish and appropriate for human consumption. The reason for this conclusion is that the swordfish, when young, has scales, but it loses them when growing older. According to the *Soncino* commentary, “fish that possessed fins and scales while in the water, shedding them when caught and brought on dry land, are permitted to be eaten.” Most, including the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in America, feel that the swordfish is an unclean animal and should not be eaten.

### **Birds**

The following birds are considered to be among those that are clean and **may be eaten**:

Chicken, dove, duck, goose, grouse, partridge, pheasant, pigeon, prairie chicken, ptarmigan, quail, turkey.

The Bible specifically lists many of the unclean birds that are **not to be eaten** (including their eggs). Many of these are birds of prey and include:

Albatross, bat [the Bible considers the bat to be a bird, even though modern scientists invented their own classification], buzzard, condor, cormorant, crane, crow, cuckoo, eagle, falcon, flamingo, hawk, ostrich [many Muslims don’t consider the ostrich as unclean, even though the Bible specifically says so], owl, parrot, pelican, penguin, raven, roadrunner, seagull, stork, swallow, vulture, woodpecker.

Disagreement exists regarding the swan. Although the *Authorized Version* lists the swan as unclean in Leviticus 11:18, the Jewish

## Chapter 1

### Deception — Then and Now!

When trying to find the true Church of God, one must recognize that the Bible warns of worldwide religious deception. While such deception was already prevalent in the early days of the New Testament Church, prophecy reveals that it will reach an unparalleled dimension in the end time. False teachings will prevail, and people will fall prey to them! Orthodox Christianity has adopted the wrong concept of “syncretism” —mixing true Christian beliefs and practices with pagan concepts—and the result has been worldwide confusion. That is why it is so important to search out and find the TRUE Church of God!

#### **Syncretism**

Syncretism is defined by *Webster’s* as “the combination of different forms of belief or practice.” The word “syncretism” does not appear in the Scriptures, but the concept is certainly addressed and condemned. Sadly, syncretism has become commonplace in mainstream Christianity to the degree that people are unaware they are being taught a combination of right aspects of godly worship mixed with wrong practices. Syncretism has been part of “Christianity” for nearly 2,000 years. In fact, the 19th-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote that “millions of people through the centuries have little by little cheated God out of Christianity.”

#### **False Religious Holidays**

Syncretism is manifested in *Sunday worship* where pagan traditions have influenced “Christian” thinking and practice. *December 25 is supposedly Jesus’ birthday*, but is an adaptation of the “birthdays” of pagan sun gods. *Easter eggs and bunnies* are derived from ancient Egypt and Persia, where friends exchanged decorated eggs at the spring equinox. *St Valentine’s Day* is connected to the pagan Roman festival, Lupercalia.

Wikipedia states that “Halloween was originally influenced by western European harvest festivals and festivals of the dead, with possible pagan roots, particularly the Celtic Samhain.” These observances, and many more, are festivals that churches typically adopt and celebrate, but which are directly opposed to true Christianity.

Deuteronomy 12:30–32 gives this warning: “... take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. **Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**”

That was God’s instruction then, as it is still today, because God does not change (Malachi 3:6).

Deuteronomy 4:2 also warns us not to add to God’s Word, nor to take away from it, but to KEEP His commandments as He gave them to us. Christ Himself tells us in Mark 7:6–9 that we worship God in vain if we teach as doctrines the commandments of men and human traditions, while laying aside the commandments of God. We learn in 2 John 9: “For if you wander beyond the teaching of Christ, you will leave God behind” (*Living Bible*).

### **End-Time Warnings**

A notable separation exists between those who keep the Truth and those who believe the deceptive lies that lead to disobeying God. Paul says: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:3–4).

Deception is at work right now! Jesus spoke of its danger when He answered His disciples’ question about what would signal the end of the age: “And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4–5). He also said: “... many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one

## Appendix D

### Clean and Unclean Animals

The Bible clearly prohibits the consumption of animal meat which it describes as “unclean” in Old and New Testament passages (such as Leviticus 11:1–47; Deuteronomy 14:3–20; and Acts 10:1–21, 28). For more information on this biblical prohibition, read our free booklet, “And Lawlessness Will Abound...”

According to the biblical designation, certain animals are considered “clean” and their meat is therefore appropriate for human consumption (compare, for example, Leviticus 11:3: “Among the animals... that you may eat...”). Although some have chosen to abstain from the consumption of animal meat, it should be noted that such a teaching, if adhered to and followed for RELIGIOUS reasons, is described in Scripture as a doctrine of demons, compare 1 Timothy 4:1–3.

Set forth below are the main animals that are either fit or unfit for human consumption:

#### ***Insects and Other “Creeping Things”:***

Among insects, only certain types of locusts **may be eaten**. However, the biblical designations of those types might not be entirely identifiable today (Leviticus 11:20–23). The *Soncino* commentary states that “the word [for grasshopper] denotes a kind of locust, but we are unable to identify it.” Some claim that today’s “grasshoppers,” as designated by modern Science, as well as some types of crickets, might be fit for human consumption.

All other insects and “creeping things,” including frogs, lizards, salamanders, slugs, snails (including the so-called “edible snail”), snakes, toads and worms, **clearly, must not be eaten**.

#### ***Fish and Other Sea Creatures:***

Regarding fish, the following animals are counted among those

another... And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:8–12).

This end-time prophecy identifies the love that would grow cold as being godly love (*agape* in Greek). It describes true Christians who had received the love of God through the Holy Spirit, which had been poured out in their hearts (Romans 5:5), but then would begin to live in lawlessness—transgression of God's law. (Sin is defined as lawlessness or the transgression of the law; see 1 John 3:4; compare also the *Authorized Version*). As a consequence of this behavior, the love of God—defined as keeping God's commandments (1 John 5:3)—will begin to "grow cold" or fade away in their daily lives, due to the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

### ***God's Charge to the Ministry***

Note the way God's commission—an obligation that falls to all true ministers of God—is relayed to Timothy: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching... But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1–2, 5).

Because the ministry is held accountable for leadership within the Church of God (compare Hebrews 13:17 and James 3:1), Paul also reminds Timothy that he is answerable to God, saying: "...Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:14–18).

In charging Timothy with "rightly dividing the word of truth," Paul brings out the fact that God's Word must be read and studied, "here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:9–10). All Scriptures relevant to a given concept must be consulted in order to avoid reaching a wrong conclusion. The Word of Truth must be taught honestly, being careful

to not add or delete anything! In dividing or “cutting straight” God’s Word, error and false interpretations are cut off. As Paul admonished Timothy to preach God’s Word “in season and out of season” (compare again 2 Timothy 4:2), and not to be “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” and the gospel (2 Timothy 1:8), so Paul also did not shun his responsibility “to declare... the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

These admonitions are relevant today. In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul tells us: “... the Spirit expressly says that *in the latter times* some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” In order for someone to depart from the faith in the latter times or the time of the end, he or she must have known, understood and believed the Truth.

The same warning is expressed in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, stating that “the Day” of Christ’s return will not come “unless the falling away comes first.” *This is clearly a reference to true Christians who are falling away from the Truth.* This statement mirrors Christ’s warning in Matthew 24:12: Just as the love of many will grow cold because of lawlessness, the falling away in 2 Thessalonians 2 will occur because of the “mystery of lawlessness” (verse 7), and because those who will fall away “did not receive the love of the truth” (verse 10).

### ***Departing from the Truth***

Departure from the Truth became a subject that the ministry of that time had to guard against, and even had to identify some who were causing dissension. Paul very specifically warned the leadership in Ephesus: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28–31).

The apostle Peter urgently warned the brethren to “be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...” (2 Peter 1:10). His appeal was made in light of what was happening at that time throughout the Church. He continues in his letter: “But there were also false prophets

understood as meaning pork. Of course, pork must not be eaten at any time (see **Appendix D**). In the USA, the reference to “bacon” can also apply to beef and to turkey. But “beef bacon bits” or “turkey bacon bits” must not be consumed during the Days of Unleavened Bread when they contain leaven (as distinguished from “autolyzed yeast,” which is not a leavening agent, and therefore appropriate for consumption, see below).

Also, many restaurants have leavening in unsuspected products, for instance in meat. Most of this information is readily available online. For instance, in checking the ingredient statement on Taco Bell’s website in the USA, we are informed that in addition to the more obvious items (such as flatbread or chalupa flatbread), their chili and their “seasoned ground beef” contain yeast (which is to be avoided during the Days of Unleavened Bread).

On the other hand, products which contain yeast extract [as distinguished from yeast] (for instance in soups), or “autolyzed yeast” or “deactivated yeast” are fine (these are not leavening agents, as they provide no fermentation activity. For instance, deactivated yeast is strictly designed to be used as a reducing agent for increased extensibility). In addition, corn tortillas are fine as well.

In addition, though, the Church of God has consistently preached and taught that certain “leavening agents,” which the Jews don’t remove, SHOULD BE removed. These leavening agents include baking soda and baking powder. Whether active agents or not, they would clearly be used as a substitute for leavening to puff up any flour or meal product, thereby violating the spirit of God’s commands. On the other hand, “brewer’s yeast,” “yeast extracts,” or “cream of tartar” do not have to be removed.

In determining whether a product fit for human consumption includes leaven, it is critically important that one looks at the ingredients of each product.

For instance, just because the word “puff” or “puffed” is in the label (for instance, “puff pastry”) does not necessarily mean that the product is leavened. In the USA, there are normally four main ingredients in puff pastry: flour, butter, salt, and water; that is, it would contain no leaven. However, in the UK, “puff pastry” DOES include leaven, as reflected on the label, which means that it must be avoided.

Some pie crusts are unleavened, but one needs to be careful here, because most crusts do have leaven in them. We are informed that Marie Calendar’s in the USA does not have leavening in their crusts. Again, it is important that the labels are carefully reviewed to ascertain what the products contain.

The following lists items which contain baking powder and/or baking soda (or sodium bicarbonate) and/or yeast and/or baker’s yeast. All of these need to be avoided during the Days of Unleavened Bread:

Crackers; bread; bagels; muffins; hamburger and hot dog buns; garlic bread; baguettes; cheese straws; sausage rolls; corn dogs; sour dough; biscuits; pretzel; (some) cereals; cheese puffs; cake; pastry; (some) pies; cookies; ice cream cones and wafers; (some) ice cream with added cookies; pancakes; waffles; puff pastry [in the UK, see comments above]; self-rising flour; graham crackers; bread crumbs; deep-fried chicken; anything battered, i.e., onion rings or fish; croutons; flour tortillas; burritos; soft tacos; Kit Kat; wafer biscuits; (some) candy; (some) candy bars; Chinese orange chicken; Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) breaded chicken; (some) cereal bars; granola bars; and (most) bacon bits.

Note that in the UK, the reference to “bacon” in “bacon bits” is

among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber... They have forsaken the right way and gone astray...” (2 Peter 2:1–3, 15).

Jude also wrote of the apostasy that was overtaking the Church in the later part of the first century AD. In just a few decades, deceitful persons had entered the Church—overturning and betraying the revealed Truth of God. Jude’s letter addresses these heretical teachings: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (verses 3–4).

Church historian and biblical scholar Jesse Hurlbut comments: “For fifty years after Paul’s life, a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we vainly strive to look; and when at last it rises, about 129 A.D. with the writings of the earliest Church Fathers, we find a Church in many ways very different from that in the days of Peter and Paul” (Hurlbut, *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 41).

Historian Edward Gibbon states: “The scanty and suspicious materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the Church” (Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch.15, p. 382).

### ***The Church of God Today***

The Church of God typified as “Philadelphia” is not the only body of believers who are part of God’s Church and who exist in this final generation that will usher in the return of Jesus Christ! In fact, faint remnants of even earlier eras also still remain (in addition to Philadelphia, it is possible that remnants of Thyatira and Sardis still exist today; compare our free booklet, “Is That in the Bible? The Mysteries

of the Book of Revelation,” pages 9–11), but it is the seventh era, the final Church of the Laodiceans, that faces very strong warnings and impending correction from Jesus Christ (compare Revelation 3:14–22).

Laodicea is *emphatically* a part of God’s Church! They are people who have been given the Spirit of God! However, the genuineness of their faith will have to be tested and proven (compare 1 Peter 1:7). In order to attain their calling to be among the firstfruits of God, they must become fervent in their works (compare Revelation 19:7–9). Laodicean Christians have the opportunity to repent now (compare Revelation 3:20–21; Luke 21:34–36), but for those who stubbornly refuse, a time of severe correction will come upon them.

The prophet Amos was inspired by God to raise the question with His people Israel: “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Christ stated in Matthew 12:25 that “... every... house divided against itself will not stand.” We understand that the major problem with the first era of the Church of God in Ephesus was that it “left its first love” (Revelation 2:4), and in like manner, the end-time Church of the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14, Authorized Version) becomes lukewarm toward God and His Way (Revelation 3:16).

Sadly, there are many splinter groups claiming to be part of the true body of Christ; however, important differences do exist between our Church organizations. Although we wish to have friendly relationships with all of our brethren in other Church groups, we cannot and will not merge with any other Christian organization that teaches different doctrines and engages in different practices.

In the next chapters, we will compare in detail the core doctrines, standards and administrations of the *Church of the Eternal God* and its *international affiliates*—in light of what the Bible reveals—with the teachings and administrative practices of orthodox Christianity and other Christian groups who claim to be part of the true body of Christ.

## Appendix C

### Leavened and Unleavened Products

God commands us that during the Festival of the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, all leavened products have to be removed from our houses, and that only unleavened products are to be consumed during that time.

We explain in our **Statements of Beliefs** that we observe:

“The Days of Unleavened Bread once a year by not partaking of any food prepared with leaven for a period of seven days following the Passover. The partaking of the unleavened bread symbolizes the commitment to live a sinless life (Leviticus 23:6–8; Acts 20:6; 1 Corinthians 5:7–8).”

For a more thorough presentation and proof that the Days of Unleavened Bread have to be kept today, please read our two free booklets, “God’s Commanded Holy Days,” and “The Meaning of God’s Spring Holy Days.”

New people who become acquainted with this Festival and want to obey God’s injunction might not have yet a clear understanding as to what constitutes leavened products, which need to be removed and avoided during the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

It has been the long-standing teaching of the Church of God that in certain respects, the spiritual concept of leaven is *both broader and narrower than the Jewish understanding*. The Church of God never taught that beverages or items *not meant or fit for human consumption* are to be removed.

It is true that leavening agents are found in a number of products other than baked goods—among these are beer, wine, antacids, some medications, bath powders, toothpastes, and dog or cat foods. Even fire extinguishers contain forms of leavening agents. But, all these need *NOT be discarded*.

available our weekly Update; and to assist both Church members and any whom God may call to salvation at this time.

### ***Policy Statement***

The *Church of the Eternal God* acknowledges all who seek a deeper understanding of God's Will. Organizations wishing to provide links to our websites may do so, freely. While these references do not imply our endorsements of a particular organization's stated beliefs, we are grateful for the opportunity to teach the truth of the gospel of the Kingdom of God to anyone, including to those whom God may be calling.

Any user may take our videos, post them on their sites, and distribute them in their entirety for non-commercial purposes only. Any editing, additions or deletions of our videos are prohibited.

## Chapter 2

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### What and Where Is the Church of God?

Not every Church organization claiming to be "Christian" is indeed accepted by God. Even among those who are part of the true spiritual body of Christ, not all are found to manifest the spiritual requirements necessary to receive God's approval, blessing and support.

The Bible shows us that a falling away from the Truth is still going to occur prior to Christ's return. We are clearly warned not to become involved with wrong teachings and practices that would cause us to depart from the Truth and "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The Church of God must continue to be the foundation and pillar of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15) and, as such, it has the responsibility of retaining and preserving the Truth, in spite of tempting obstacles and the enticing spirit of compromise.

### ***Our Statement of Beliefs***

We have set forth our foundational teachings and practices in our **Statement of Beliefs** (see Appendix A).

### ***The Holy Bible***

Under "The Holy Bible", we say:

"Our doctrines and practices are based upon a literal understanding of the teachings revealed in the entire Bible. We believe that the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments are God's revelation of His Will to man, inspired in thought and word, and infallible in the original writings; that said Scriptures are the supreme and final authority in faith and life, the source of Truth and the foundation of all knowledge."

## Appendix B

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### About Us

The *Church of the Eternal God* (in the United States—with its operations in Europe, including *Kirche des Ewigen Gottes* (in German-speaking areas), the *Church of God, a Christian Fellowship* (Canada) and the *Global Church of God* (United Kingdom) coexist to fulfill the Work given to the Church Jesus Christ sustains. It is through the fruit of unity in God's Holy Spirit that we strive to be of one mind in both purpose and practice.

We conduct weekly Sabbath services in local congregations where possible. We also observe biblical Holy Days as commanded by God. We broadcast weekly and annual live services over the Internet for those who are unable to attend in person. We emphasize that our Church services in local congregations and at our annual Feast sites, as well as during our live broadcasts are holy and sacred convocations.

Participants in person and over the Internet should conduct themselves appropriately during services, and this includes proper dress when we are appearing before God. We would encourage any person interested in our services to contact the ministry to receive guidance and answers to any questions. In general, we welcome guests to our Church services, as long as they are not contentious and worship with us in peace and harmony and in accordance with our doctrines and practices. On an individual basis, someone from another organization can be asked to participate during services, but this would be at the minister's discretion.

In fulfilling the commission Jesus Christ has given to His Church, we maintain websites for access to our published materials; to present Church messages (both recorded and live); to publicly proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God through the *StandingWatch* programs (including the German language program, *AufPostenStehen*); to make

This means that we will not deviate from the Truth as we have been given to understand it, and this has many practical consequences in our daily lives. In addition, we believe that the Church of God has existed throughout the ages since the founding of the New Testament Church in 31 A.D. We also believe that it will continue to exist, as Christ said that the “gates of hell” would never prevail against God's Church (Matthew 16:18; *Authorized Version*). In other words, the Church of God would never “die” and cease to exist. Therefore, it must still exist today—in this end time—just prior to Christ's return.

We realize that the Book of Revelation describes the history of God's Church by referring to seven distinct Church eras, beginning with the time of the early apostles and ending with the time of Christ's return. During these eras, the Church would sometimes lose some aspects of the Truth, which would then be restored in the next era, only to be lost again to an extent, and to be restored again. However, as long as a particular era existed, some fundamental teachings would be retained by the Church in that era; e.g., observance of the weekly Sabbath. However, when an era ended, even the Sabbath command might have fallen into oblivion among those belonging to that Church era.

We believe that when the Philadelphia era was reached, much of the Truth (which had been lost by the end of the prior Sardis era) was restored. This included, for example, the *observance of God's annual Holy Days*, which had been forgotten. We believe that that restoration in the Philadelphia era occurred under the human leadership of the late Herbert W. Armstrong, in the then-called *Worldwide Church of God*. Subsequently, after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, the *Worldwide Church of God* entered the Laodicean era, but it did not remain a part of God's Church in that era. Rather, it began to dismantle virtually all aspects of the Truth, including the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days, and *it ceased to be part of* the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

#### **Doctrinal Foundation**

We see ourselves as part of the continuation of the Philadelphia era, and in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Doctrinal Foundation”, we state the following:

“The major doctrines of the Church are those, which were taught by Herbert W. Armstrong, derived from the Biblical



teachings as followed by God's faithful servants, and originally established by Jesus Christ through the founding of His Church in the time of His chosen early apostles. Since we are to increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are committed to review and alter any of our teachings, if and when proven to be wrong by the Bible."

We understand that we must grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). This means that the Church of God, being faithful to God's Truth, will grow in deeper understanding, and if it is realized that biblical clarifications and amendments to our understanding must be made, we will do so. In this, we follow the example of Mr. Armstrong who made changes in Church teaching when he realized that such changes were compelled by God's Word, the Bible. But we also realize that these changes must always be based on the foundation of the Truth which has already been laid by Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20).

This means that we will not throw away everything we had once understood and start "from scratch," as some have done. Rather, we will abide by prior teachings, unless they are clearly seen to be in need of modification, again, based on Scripture. This approach includes "gray" areas, fully believing that God gave His authority to His Church to bind and loose; that is, to make binding decisions for the purpose of perhaps clarifying something that might have been "ambiguous" or "unclear" to some (Matthew 16:19; 18:18).

At the same time, we strongly reject the *false concept* that nothing can be changed after Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986. This wrong idea places trust and confidence in a man, rather than in God.

### **Church Government**

The Church of God is organized hierarchically. In our **Statement of Beliefs**, we say the following under "Church Government":

"We believe that the proper form of government within the Church is 'hierarchical,' as explained in many Scriptures in the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Ephesians 2:19-21 and Ephesians 4:11-16. God the Father is above all, and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is under the Father. Christ appoints those under Him who are to serve, lead and guide the Church on a human level."

Here are some examples of the way in which God's government functions:

### *Smoking, Illegal Drugs and Political Affairs*

We understood very clearly that it is wrong and a SIN to smoke; to take illegal mind-altering drugs; to get involved in political affairs in an attempt to try to make this world a better place; to serve and judge on a jury; to vote in governmental elections; or to join the military. Even though some argue that none of these actions are expressly designated as "sinful" in Scripture and must therefore be permitted, the spirit of the law clearly condemns all of them.

Further, the Church of God in the Philadelphia era made the biblical decision that these actions are sinful, and since one cannot remotely argue that the Bible expressly endorses and promotes such conduct and makes it mandatory for Christians, we abide by our understanding that Christians must refrain from those actions.

### *Christmas and Easter*

Further examples are the celebration of Christmas and Easter. You will not find an express proclamation to the effect that "it is sin" to celebrate Christmas, or that "it is sin" to celebrate Easter, as neither Christmas nor Easter are mentioned, by name, in Scripture. At the same time, it is abundantly compelling from the spirit of the law that these pagan festivals are not to be kept by true Christians, even though orthodox Christianity does so by placing a "Christian" mantle on them. In addition, as the Church of God in the Philadelphia era made the doctrinal decision, which was clearly based on the teaching of the Bible, that it IS sin to celebrate Christmas and Easter, we naturally abide by this decision.

### *The Hebrew Calendar and Modern Judaism*

Other examples include our acceptance of the Hebrew calendar and when, exactly, to observe *Passover* and *Pentecost*. Some believe that they must design their own calendar to determine when to celebrate God's annual Holy Days, and utmost confusion has been the result.

We abide by the established understanding in the Philadelphia era under Herbert W. Armstrong that we will accept the current Hebrew

neighborhoods knocking on doors. We carry out our various projects in an effort to freely give to all people regardless of their race, nationality, or religious affiliation. We believe in the godly way of helping others by providing the financial means by tithing and voluntary contributions.

### **Civic Government**

We believe that we are to be subject to the government of our country and its laws (Romans 13:1–5; 1 Peter 2:13–17); that we are to pay our taxes (Matthew 22:17–21; Mark 12:14–17; Romans 13:6–7); that we are to pray for leaders of government (1 Timothy 2:1–3); and that we are to honor those leaders (1 Peter 2:17; Romans 13:7)

attending one of the Church's designated sites around the world. This period symbolizes the reign of Christ for 1,000 years, together with His saints made immortal, during which time Satan will be bound and the entire world will be living under the government of God (Leviticus 23:33–35; Daniel 7:27; John 7:2–8, 10–14; Revelation 20:4).

### ***The Last Great Day***

The Last Great Day which immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles, once a year. This day symbolizes a 100-year period called the "Great White Throne Judgment," during which all persons who have ever lived and who were never called by God for salvation during this life, will have their first opportunity to accept Christ as their Savior (Leviticus 23:36; John 7:37; Revelation 20:11–12). At the end of that period, there will be a judgment during which all people who have ever lived and who have refused to accept Christ as their Savior, will be finally condemned to eternal death and destroyed in Gehenna fire (Revelation 20:13–15).

### ***Unclean Meats***

We believe that we are to refrain from eating meats which the Bible instructs not to eat and designates as unclean in passages such as Leviticus 11:1–47; Deuteronomy 14:3–20; and Acts 10:1–21, 28.

### ***Relationship with God***

We believe that a Christian's duty to God is of a superior and higher nature than our duty arising from any human relationship (Acts 4:18–20; 5:27–29). We therefore, following Biblical commands and principles, do not participate in voting for national elections or jury duty, and we do not join the military. On the other hand, we do not object to participation in civil service. If compelled by governments to enlist, we refuse to serve in any capacity that would violate the spirit of the sixth commandment against murder (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:43–48; Romans 12:17–21).

### ***Proselytizing***

We do not believe in proselytizing. Therefore, we do not seek members by having people standing on street corners or going around

calendar as binding authority, including any postponements within the calendar, but we also abide by the understanding that we must observe the Holy Days *according to the Bible*, and not according to modern Judaism. This means that we recognize that most Jews keep Passover *one day too late*, and that they sometimes count or determine *wrongly when to keep the Day of Pentecost*.

### ***Decisions Regarding Modifications***

When a decision might have to be made regarding possible modifications to our teachings, this will not be done hastily, but only after prayer to God for wisdom and for a clearer understanding of the Bible. We realize that it is Jesus Christ—not any man—who leads the Church of God (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and if we want to be true and faithful Christians, we must follow Him, wherever and however He leads us.

We believe that Christ inspires and leads us when it is revealed to us that we must alter a particular aspect of our teachings, and we conduct regular meetings within the ministry to evaluate those matters. *We are not a democracy* where unordained members and attendees rule and decide what the teachings of the Church should be; *nor* do we operate as a *presbytery* with all ministers having one "vote" to determine and decide by majority opinion in a given matter.

### ***Ranks in the Ministry***

We do believe in and teach the existence of God-given ranks within the ministry (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28), and that ultimately the highest-ranking minister will have to make a final decision; he must, however, not do so with a self-willed stubborn attitude, without first obtaining counsel from especially the high-ranking ministers and carefully evaluating the entire matter. Hearty counsel is always appreciated and welcome; and a true minister of God will be very careful not to engage in useless speculations. At the same time, he will not refrain from announcing necessary biblical and godly decisions for fear of how others might respond. It has been our experience that after honest prayerful discussion and humble submission to the lead of God's Holy Spirit, God's true and faithful ministers have been in agreement with whatever doctrinal decision had to be made, but again,

it is ultimately the responsibility of the highest-ranking minister to make and pronounce such a decision, as he will have to give account to God for it.

### ***God's Church a Spiritual Organism***

We realize that the Church of God is a "Spiritual Organism," as we say in our **Statement of Beliefs**:

"We believe that it is not a building that constitutes 'the Church,' but that the Church is a spiritual organism; that Christ is the Head of the Church; and that the Church is composed of members who have living within them the Holy Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 17). We believe that Church members must be called by God (John 6:44) and when they have truly repented and believed, they are baptized by immersion and, after the laying on of hands by one of *God's true ministers*, receive the Holy Spirit (John 6:44; Acts 2:38, 47)."

### ***Physical Organization***

We realize that this does not mean that the Church of God is not organized physically. The opposite is true, but the Church of God will always be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32). The Church of God is *not a physical building*, but Church congregations *meet in buildings* to conduct Church services (Hebrews 10:24–25). The Bible does not endorse independent "individual Christianity" apart from God's Church.

### ***Ministers Necessary***

Without God's true ministers, nobody could even become a Christian, as it is the duty and responsibility of God's true ministers to teach the Truth (Romans 10:14–17) and, as will be explained below, to baptize a repentant person, with the laying on of their hands (Hebrews 6:2), and only then can a person rely on God's promise to receive His Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14–18; Acts 19:5–6). We believe and teach that without God's Holy Spirit living within us, we are not true Christians (Romans 8:9).

It is therefore important that we recognize where God's true Church exists today, and we are not *just* talking about a spiritual organism.

example, and partaking of the unleavened bread and wine, symbolizing physical and spiritual healing and forgiveness of sin. The entire service symbolizes a remembrance of Christ's death (Leviticus 23:5; Luke 22:14–20; John 13:1–5; 1 Corinthians 11:20–29).

### ***The Days of Unleavened Bread***

The Days of Unleavened Bread once a year by not partaking of any food prepared with leaven for a period of seven days following the Passover. The partaking of the unleavened bread symbolizes the commitment to live a sinless life (Leviticus 23:6–8; Acts 20:6; 1 Corinthians 5:7–8).

### ***Pentecost***

The Feast of Pentecost once a year. This day symbolizes the coming of God's Holy Spirit for the purpose of converting those called by God at this time (Leviticus 23:15–16, 21; Acts 2:1–4; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8).

### ***The Feast of Trumpets***

The Feast of Trumpets once a year. This day symbolizes the soon coming return of Jesus Christ to this earth (Leviticus 23:24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), and our resurrection or change to immortality, to be born again into the Kingdom or Family of God (1 Corinthians 15:50–54, 42–49; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; John 3:3, 5–8).

### ***Atonement***

The Day of Atonement once a year by refraining from partaking of any and all solid food or liquid for a period of 24 hours. This day symbolizes those called by God during this life, having received at-one-ment with God; those who can receive at-one-ment with God after Christ's return; and the transfer of sin to Satan as the one who is ultimately responsible for all sin (Leviticus 16:1–34; Leviticus 23:27–32; Acts 27:9).

### ***The Feast of Tabernacles***

The Feast of Tabernacles once a year, for seven consecutive days, by

## **Law, Sin and Love**

We believe that sin is the transgression of the Law, and hence we strive to keep the Law as summed up in the word, “love.” (Romans 13:10). Love involves two great principles of love towards God and love towards neighbor. The Ten Commandments compose the ten points of the Law (Matthew 22:37–39; James 2:8–11).

## **Tithing**

We believe in the godly institution of tithing to enable the Church to carry out its commission of preaching the gospel and feeding the flock. We believe that needy members are to be helped and taken care of, including through the tithing system described in the Bible, by other members of the Church (Luke 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:8; James 2:15–16).

## **Grace and Works**

We believe that true Christians are saved by God’s grace, not according to their works (Ephesians 2:8–9), but that their reward is dependent on the good works they perform (Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12).

## **Observation of God’s Commanded Holy Days**

We believe that we are to observe certain weekly and annual Holy Days, during which time we are to attend Church services and to refrain from secular labor, including school, college or university attendance, and which time we are to dedicate and devote to worship, spiritual study, prayer, fellowship with Church members, and physical rest. These weekly and annual Holy Days are:

### **Weekly Sabbath**

The seventh-day weekly Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The day symbolizes God’s resting on the seventh day, after having recreated the surface of the earth in six days, and the forthcoming Millennium which is also referred to as a Sabbath lasting for 1,000 years (Leviticus 23:3; Exodus 20:8–11, Hebrews 4:3–11).

### **Passover**

The Passover once a year in the evening by engaging in a footwashing service as an example of humility in accordance with Christ’s

## **Correct Name**

One of the identifying signs of God’s true Church is its correct name. Many church groups have adopted names that are not biblical, and without even realizing this fact, are therefore disqualified from claiming that they belong to the body of Christ. Christ Himself made it clear what the true name of the Church of God would entail and include.

He said in John 17:11–12: “Holy Father, keep through *Your name* those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in Your name*...” Revelation 14:1 describes the future of true Christians, saying that the “Father’s *name*” will be “written on their foreheads,” and Revelation 22:1–4 confirms that at the time of the New Jerusalem’s descent from heaven, “God’s *name* shall be on the foreheads” of Christians having been made immortal. Revelation 3:12 says that Christ will write on true Christians “the *name* of My God.”

In addition, Christ said that He came “in My Father’s *name*” (John 5:43); and that He did the works “in My Father’s *name*” (John 10:25). Ephesians 3:14–15 tells us: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth *is named*.”

## **The Father’s Name**

To identify the true Church of God, we need to understand what the *Father’s name* is.

God is a Family, consisting, at this point, of the Father and the Son (*the Holy Spirit is NOT a person*, but the power and mind of God emanating from both the Father and the Son), as well as Spirit-*begotten* Christians who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit at the time of their baptism. We must realize that the Father is the HIGHEST Personage within the God Family; and the Bible reveals that HIS Name is “GOD.”

We read in 1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one GOD and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” We read in 1 Peter 1:3: “Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” In John 5:18 we read that the Jews wanted to kill Christ “because He... said that GOD was His Father, making Himself equal with GOD.”

In John 20:17, Christ clearly identifies the name of the Father as God, saying, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to

My GOD and your GOD.” Paul elaborates on this, saying in 1 Corinthians 11:3 that “the head of every man is Christ... and the head of Christ is GOD.”

Even though the name of the Father is GOD, we are instructed by Christ to pray to God by addressing Him as “Our Father.” This shows our intimate relationship with Him.

### *Church Preserved in the Name of the Father*

Having identified the name of the Father as “God,” notice how the New Testament Church is described and *named* in the Bible—realizing that Christ would preserve the Church in the NAME of the Father:

Acts 20:28 says: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the *church of God* which He purchased with His own blood.”

1 Corinthians 1:2 speaks of “the *church of God* which is at Corinth.”

1 Corinthians 10:32 states: “Give no offense... to the *church of God*.”

1 Corinthians 11:22 warns not to “despise the *church of God*.”

1 Corinthians 15:9 states that Paul “persecuted the *church of God*.”

2 Corinthians 1:1 speaks again of the “*church of God* which is at Corinth.”

Paul repeats in Galatians 1:13 that prior to his conversion, he “persecuted the *church of God* beyond measure and tried to destroy it.”

1 Timothy 3:5 explains who should be a minister to “take care of the *church of God*.”

1 Timothy 3:15 defines the “house of God” as “the *church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

In addition, there are three Scriptural passages which speak of the “*churches of God*” in reference to all the local Church congregations in a collective sense (1 Corinthians 11:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:14 and 2 Thessalonians 1:4). Sometimes, Paul would in that regard talk about “all the churches” (1 Corinthians 7:17); “every church” (1 Corinthians 4:17); and “all the churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

In identifying just one or a few local congregation(s), he would speak of “the church that is in their house” (1 Corinthians 16:19; compare Philemon 2); “the churches of Galatia” (Galatians 1:2); “the churches of Judea which were in Christ” (Galatians 1:22); or of “the churches of Asia” (1 Corinthians 16:19); and he even refers one time to local

### ***The Holy Spirit of God***

We believe in the Holy Spirit which is the power of God, both of the Father and of the Son, given by God to a truly repentant person at the time of baptism; and that through this power, God the Father resurrected Christ from the dead and will likewise resurrect us from the dead (1 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 8:11). We believe that we are not true Christians, if the Holy Spirit of God does not dwell in us (Romans 8:9).

### ***Man’s Part in God’s Family***

We believe that it is the potential of Man to become a born-again immortal and divine member of the God-Family; that God is in the process of reproducing Himself through Man; and that those who have received God’s Holy Spirit are already the children of God, but they are not glorified yet (1 John 3:1–3; Romans 8:12–17). We believe that Jesus Christ, the “Logos” or “the Word of God” or “the Spokesman” (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1–3; Revelation 19:13), the second divine member of the God Family, became Man, in order to overcome sin in the flesh and to die for us (Romans 8:3), so that Man, accepting the sacrifice of Christ and letting Christ live His life in him, could become a divine member of the God Family as well.

### ***Angels***

We believe in the existence of holy angels, who faithfully serve God. We also believe that there are “fallen” angels who are in rebellion to God, and who are referred to in scripture as Satan and his demons.

### ***Human’s Mortal Nature***

We believe that humans are mortal and subject to death, and that they can only obtain immortality through a gift from God.

### ***Human Spirit***

We believe that every human being has in himself or herself a “human spirit” given by God, that distinguishes man from animals (1 Corinthians 2:11), and that goes back to God when man dies (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

the Church; and that the Church is composed of members who have living within them the Holy Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 17). We believe that Church members must be called by God (John 6:44) and when they have truly repented and believed, they are baptized by immersion and, after the laying on of hands by one of God’s true ministers, receive the Holy Spirit (John 6:44; Acts 2:38, 47).

### ***The Church’s Commission***

We believe that it is the Church’s commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness, to warn all nations, and especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel (mainly in the United States, Great Britain, certain Commonwealth nations and nations in Northwestern Europe) of impending danger, and to feed the flock of Christ—the Church—spiritually and physically.

### ***God is a Family***

We believe that God is a Kingdom or a Family, the Kingdom or Family of God (Ephesians 3:14–15); that God consists of the Father and the Son Jesus Christ, but with the potential of Man to become part of God’s very Family (Ephesians 3:16–19); that God the Father created everything through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1–2).

### ***Belief in Jesus as the Messiah***

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of God the Father; that He was in the beginning with God the Father (John 1:1), that He became Man (John 1:14), born in the human flesh of the virgin Mary; that He lived a sinless life; that He was crucified and died for us, thereby paying the penalty for our sins; that He was buried and dead in the grave for three days and three nights; that He was resurrected and ascended into the Heavens, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father; that He is now the High Priest of true Christians, intervening for them before God the Father; that He will come back at the “end time” to establish the Kingdom and Government of God here on earth, by sitting on the throne of David (presently in Great Britain), and to rule all nations (Luke 1:32–33; Daniel 7:14).

congregations as “the churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16), since Christ is the Head of the Church. However, these are just general references or character descriptions and not designations of the Church’s *name*.

Based on all the Scriptural evidence, it is abundantly clear that the true Church will include *in its name* a reference to “God,” since Christ prayed that the Father would preserve His Church *in His name*, and the Father’s name is “God.” In one case, we read about the “Church of the *living* God,” and other references talk about the Church of God by adding a *local designation* (for example, “which is at Corinth”). Accordingly, our Church organizations are known by correct biblical names; i.e., “Church of the *Eternal* God” (in the USA); “*Global* Church of God” (in the UK); and “Church of God, a *Christian* Fellowship” (in Canada); and by corresponding expressions in other languages, such as, in German, “Kirche des *Ewigen* Gottes.”

# Appendix A

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## Statement of Beliefs

### ***The Holy Bible***

Our doctrines and practices are based upon a literal understanding of the teachings revealed in the entire Bible. We believe that the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments are God's revelation of His Will to man, inspired in thought and word, and infallible in the original writings; that said Scriptures are the supreme and final authority in faith and life, the source of Truth and the foundation of all knowledge.

### ***Doctrinal Foundation***

The major doctrines of the Church are those, which were taught by Herbert W. Armstrong, derived from the Biblical teachings as followed by God's faithful servants, and originally established by Jesus Christ through the founding of His Church in the time of His chosen early apostles. Since we are to increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are committed to review and alter any of our teachings, if and when proven to be wrong by the Bible.

### ***Church Government***

We believe that the proper form of government within the Church is "hierarchical," as explained in many Scriptures in the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 12:12–30; Ephesians 2:19–21 and Ephesians 4:11–16. God the Father is above all, and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is under the Father. Christ appoints those under Him who are to serve, lead and guide the Church on a human level.

### ***The Church is a Spiritual Organism***

We believe that it is not a building that constitutes "the Church," but that the Church is a spiritual organism; that Christ is the Head of



## Chapter 3

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### The Commission of the Church — Preaching the Gospel

In the first two chapters of this booklet, we discussed the fact that the Church of God must be the foundation and pillar of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15); and that it has the responsibility to retain and preserve the Truth, in spite of tempting obstacles and the enticing spirit of compromise. We also discussed our belief in the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures; our doctrinal foundation; and our Church government; and we explained what the Bible means by stating that the Church is a spiritual organism. We emphasized that this fact does not exclude the necessity of physical organizations. In that context, we showed the importance of the Church's correct biblical name.

#### **Church Commission**

Jesus Christ gave His Church an important commission, especially for these last days. When focusing on this commission and how it is being carried out, we find another identifying sign for God's true Church. We describe this important task in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under "The Church's Commission," as follows:

"We believe that it is the Church's commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness, to warn all nations, and especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel (mainly in the United States, Great Britain, certain Commonwealth nations and nations in Northwestern Europe) of impending danger, and to feed the flock of Christ—the Church—spiritually and physically."

In this chapter, we will focus on the *Church's commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness*. In the next two chapters, we will address the remainder of the Church's commission; i.e., to warn the nations and to feed the flock of Christ.

## ***Preaching the Gospel***

Rightly understood, very few can be identified as fulfilling the Church's commission of preaching the gospel as a witness in the entire world. But we do read in the Bible about the responsibility of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God in this end-time, and once God determines this commission as having been fulfilled, Christ will return. Matthew 24:14 tells us: "And THIS gospel OF THE KINGDOM will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." Mark 13:10 confirms this: "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations."

### ***Only One Gospel—the Gospel OF the Kingdom of God***

There is only one gospel (Galatians 1:6–9). It is identified in the Bible as the gospel OF THE KINGDOM OF God (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 60; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30–31).

Christ spoke many *parables* about the Kingdom of God. He did this so that only those whose minds were opened to the Truth—the few—could understand His message (Luke 8:9–10).

First, note that it is the *gospel* which must be preached. The word gospel means "good news" or "glad tidings." As Christ came to preach the gospel or good news of the Kingdom (Matthew 9:35), so did the early apostles (1 Corinthians 9:16), and so must His Church do today. The fact that the worldwide preaching of the gospel is *a sign* for the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ shows us that, after the early apostles had died, it was not preached to the world for almost 2,000 years.

### ***What the Gospel Message Includes***

Secondly, note that the gospel includes, among other aspects, a message *ABOUT* Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44–46); about the grace of God (Acts 20:24); repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47); the belief in and obedience to the gospel (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8); our salvation (Ephesians 1:13); peace (Ephesians 6:15); the promise of eternal life (2 Timothy 1:10); rulership of Christ and the saints here on earth (Revelation 20:4, 6; Daniel 2:44; 7:21–22, 27); and a message about the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:11).

However, the gospel of the Kingdom of God includes much more. We read that it is the gospel *OF* Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16;

## **Conclusion**

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In this booklet, we have shown you that we are different from other Christian organizations, and we have discussed the many ways in which we differ. We have explained that our teachings and practices are based on and derived from the Bible.

Will you, the reader, follow the example of the people of Berea who "were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11)? When they did, "many of them believed" (verse 12). We pray that you will learn and embrace the Truth, because the Truth—and ONLY the TRUTH—will make you free (John 8:32).

Animal fat refers to the fatty portion of the meat (Leviticus 3:17; 7:23, 25), which can be easily separated from the lean portion. It does not prohibit small portions of fat in ground meat, hamburgers or hot dogs. It does of course not refer to “fatty” food such as butter or cheese (compare Genesis 18:8; Isaiah 7:15; and 2 Samuel 17:27–29; all in the Authorized Version).

For a much deeper analysis in consideration of the Scriptures, please see **Appendix D** for more information on clean and unclean meat; also identifying the clean animals that *can be eaten*, and the unclean animals that *must not be eaten*. You might also want to read the following free booklets, “And Lawlessness Will Abound...” and “Old Testament Laws—Still Valid Today?”

1 Corinthians 9:12), or Christ’s gospel (2 Corinthians 2:12). It is a message that God the Father gave to Jesus Christ, the “Messenger” (Malachi 3:1) in order to proclaim it (compare also Revelation 1:1). But the gospel message was also *Christ’s* message, because it is called the gospel *OF* the Kingdom of God, and Christ is a member of the Kingdom of God.

### ***The God Family***

God is a Kingdom, or a ruling Family.

The God Family is described in our **Statement of Beliefs** as follows, under “God is a Family”:

“We believe that God is a Kingdom or a Family, the Kingdom or Family of God (Ephesians 3:14–15); that God consists of the Father and the Son Jesus Christ, but with the potential of man to become part of God’s very Family (Ephesians 3:16–19); that God the Father created everything through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1–2).”

Both the Father and the Son have always existed as the God *FAMILY*. In addition, it is the potential of man to become part of the God Family; to enter the God Family as immortal God beings—actually *born-again* sons and daughters of God the Father, and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ—composed of Spirit just as God and Christ are Spirit beings.

The gospel *OF* the Kingdom of God is a gospel *originating with* the Kingdom of God—the ruling God Family. It is the gospel *OF* God the Father (Romans 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:8–9) and *OF* Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

But it was also the gospel *OF* Paul (Romans 2:16; 16:25; 2 Timothy 2:8), and it is also “*OUR*” gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Here is why: If we have been baptized and have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are Spirit-*begotten* members of the Family and Kingdom of God. Then, we have received the great privilege and responsibility to preach and live according to the gospel or good news *OF*—emanating from—the Kingdom or Family of God; that is, of the Father, of the Son, and of us as begotten children of God. Once we have received the Holy Spirit, dwelling within us and leading us, then we have become part of the Kingdom of God, but only “in embryo.”

## ***Belief in Jesus as the Messiah***

This gospel message includes our belief that Jesus Christ died for us as our personal Savior, and it includes the correct understanding as to who and what Christ was and is. We explain it in this way in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Belief in Jesus as the Messiah”:

“We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of God the Father; that He was in the beginning with God the Father (John 1:1), that He became Man (John 1:14), born in the human flesh of the virgin Mary; that He lived a sinless life; that He was crucified and died for us, thereby paying the penalty for our sins; that He was buried and dead in the grave for three days and three nights; that He was resurrected and ascended into the Heavens, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father; that He is now the High Priest of true Christians, intervening for them before God the Father; that He will come back at the ‘end time’ to establish the Kingdom and Government of God here on earth, by sitting on the throne of David (presently in Great Britain), and to rule all nations (Luke 1:32–33; Daniel 7:14).”

### ***Careful Review of Our Belief in Jesus Christ***

A careful review of these statements should reveal *remarkable differences* to most of the other “Christian” denominations. We clearly believe that the Bible tells us:

1. that prior to Christ’s First Coming, He was God and always existed as God—a God BEING or PERSONAGE; which means, He was *not an angel or created* by God the Father; or some godly “thoughts” which were given a human body;
2. that the Father was always the Father and that Christ was always the Son of God, the second Member of the God Family;
3. that Christ became a *Man, ceasing to be an immortal God being*, which means that He was NOT fully God and fully man when He lived here on earth;
4. that Mary was a virgin and conceived Christ through the power of God the Father’s Holy Spirit; but that *Mary did not stay a virgin*; rather, after Christ’s birth, she and Joseph had four sons and at least three daughters;

[In addition, even IF we were to say that man was an animal (allegedly a “mammal” according to science), man would not qualify as “clean”—being fit for consumption—since the only mammals that can be eaten are those that divide the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud (Leviticus 11:3).]

Not every animal is fit for human consumption.

We say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Unclean Meats”:

“We believe that we are to refrain from eating meats which the Bible instructs not to eat and designates as unclean in passages such as Leviticus 11:1–47; Deuteronomy 14:3–20; and Acts 10:1–21, 28.”

God does not teach us that we must be vegetarians, nor does He compel us to eat meat. The same applies to alcohol, which is not mandated for us (except for a small portion at the time of the Passover). On the other hand, Christ and His disciples ate meat (Luke 22:13–15) and drank wine (Matthew 11:19), and Paul admonished Timothy to drink a little wine—not just water—because of his frequent infirmities (1 Timothy 5:23). It would be clearly WRONG to be a vegetarian because of religious reasons, as this idea is of demonic origin (compare 1 Timothy 4:1–3; see discussion in **Appendix D**).

However, we are still duty-bound to refrain from eating unclean meat. God did not suddenly make unclean meat fit for human consumption.

### ***Medicines, Vitamins and Mineral Supplements***

Even though God still requires us to abstain from consuming the meat of UNCLEAN animals, this does not necessarily prohibit the use of medicines, vitamins and mineral supplements derived from unclean animals, and the use of gelatin products, which might be derived from parts of unclean animals; while the prohibition of consuming certain parts of clean animals, such as fat and blood, is still valid for us today.

### ***Blood and Fat***

We are not to consume blood, see Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:20. However, this prohibition does not include, for example, blood transfusions or the juice in rare steaks.

in him has recorded the appearance of the person, the personality and the personal attributes, and at the time of the resurrection, God gives the spirit of that person back into the newly created Spirit-composed or physical body.

The spirit in man is not the same as the Holy Spirit either. The Bible distinguishes clearly between the spirit in man and the Holy Spirit. God gives to every human being the spirit of man at the time of conception, while He only grants His Holy Spirit to those whom He specifically calls.

Paul says in Romans 8:14–16, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [“sonship”; compare *New International Version* and *Revised Standard Version*] by [which] we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

### *Two Spirits*

Paul speaks very clearly about two spirits—the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit. Notice 1 Corinthians 2:11 and 14, “For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of the man which is in him. Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God... But the natural man [a person who has the spirit of man, but who does not have the Holy Spirit of God] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

It is the gift of the Holy Spirit which distinguishes a converted person from a carnally-minded individual, and it is the spirit in man which distinguishes man from animals.

### *Unclean Meats*

Inasmuch as man is not an animal, God has decreed that man is permitted to eat animal meat. If man was an animal, then man would clearly be prohibited from doing so, as God condemns cannibalism. Some Scriptures which clearly disapprove of cannibalism and show how much God abhors it, describing it as a curse, can be found in Deuteronomy 28:52–57; Jeremiah 19:1–9; Lamentations 2:19–21; 4:10–11; and Ezekiel 5:7–10.

5. that Jesus Christ overcame sin in the flesh through the power of God the Father’s Holy Spirit living within Him; and that He never sinned even once;
6. that He was tortured, murdered and quite literally died;
7. that He was dead, which means that He did *not have an immortal soul* that kept on living, and that He (His “soul”) did not go to “hell” to preach to the dead while He was in the grave; nor do we believe the blasphemous idea that the “Son of God,” as part of an unchangeable “Trinity,” kept on living in Heaven, while Christ was dead on earth;
8. that Jesus was in the grave for *three days and three nights*, which means that He could not have been crucified on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday; rather, He was crucified on a Wednesday and placed in the grave just before sunset, when the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an annual Sabbath, started on *Wednesday evening* at sunset; He was resurrected to immortal life with the glory that He had before He became a Man; and He left the grave just about sunset, *when the weekly Sabbath ended*;
9. that He ascended to God the Father in the Third Heaven, where He functions now as our *living* High Priest, intervening for God’s people before God the Father;
10. that He WILL return to this earth, as He has promised, to establish God’s rule *on this earth*; He will not rule from heaven over the earth;
11. that He will return *only once, visibly*, at the time of the seventh or last trumpet; that He will rule *from David’s throne*, which will be transferred from Great Britain (where it is now) to Jerusalem; that He will share His rule with the born-again immortal people of God; and
12. that He and the immortal saints will rule *IN* the Kingdom of God as born-again members of the God Family, and that they will rule *on earth*, not from heaven over the earth, thereby ending all human governments.

### ***The Holy Spirit***

God *IS* a Family of God beings, but *the Holy Spirit is not God, a God*

*being or a Person.* This is another decisive difference between the *Church of the Eternal God and its affiliated international organizations*, and most other Christian denominations.

We state the following in our **Statement of Beliefs** under “The Holy Spirit of God”:

“We believe in the Holy Spirit which is the power of God, both of the Father and of the Son, given by God to a truly repentant person at the time of baptism; and that through this power, God the Father resurrected Christ from the dead and will likewise resurrect us from the dead (1 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 8:11). We believe that we are not true Christians, if the Holy Spirit of God does not dwell in us (Romans 8:9).”

This means that the Holy Spirit is NOT a person; and therefore, the *wrong belief in God being a Trinity*—“One Person in Three Persons”—must be rejected. Nor is it biblical to believe in only *one* God Being, consisting of three modes or “three hypostases” of this “one Being,” as God IS a Family, consisting of TWO God Beings, who are “one” or “unified” in purpose and mind; but with the goal of enlarging the God Family by adding many more members to it.

### ***Man’s Part in God’s Family***

In this regard, we state in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Man’s Part in God’s Family”:

“We believe that it is the potential of man to become a born-again immortal and divine member of the God-Family; that God is in the process of reproducing Himself through man; and that those who have received God’s Holy Spirit are already the children of God, but they are not glorified yet (1 John 3:1–3; Romans 8:12–17). We believe that Jesus Christ, the ‘Logos’ or ‘the Word of God’ or ‘the Spokesman’ (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1–3; Revelation 19:13), the second divine member of the God Family, became Man, in order to overcome sin in the flesh and to die for us (Romans 8:3), so that man, accepting the sacrifice of Christ and letting Christ live His life in him, could become a divine member of the God Family as well.”

animals “according to their kind”—the animal kind—but He created man after the God kind. We read in Acts 17:28–29, in the translation of the new *Luther Bible of 2009*, that man is “of the God kind” (“von Gottes Art”).

Man is not an animal. Every human being receives, at the moment of conception, a human spirit, and it is because of the human spirit that we can explain the vast difference between humans and animals. For further information, please read our free booklets, “The Theory of Evolution—a Fairy Tale for Adults” and “Heavens and Earth... Before and After the First Man!”

### ***The Human Spirit***

We say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Human Spirit”:

“We believe that every human being has in himself or herself a ‘human spirit’ given by God, that distinguishes man from animals (1 Corinthians 2:11), and that goes back to God when man dies (Ecclesiastes 12:7).”

In the book of Isaiah we are told that each human being has a spirit within him: “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it” (Isaiah 42:5).

We read in Zechariah 12:1: “...Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.” When the spirit of man leaves a person, that person is dead. James 2:26 says, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

When a person dies and his spirit returns to God, that spirit does not continue to live consciously, apart from the body. Rather, God “stores” it, so to speak, in heaven, until He unites it at the time of the resurrection of man with a new spiritual or physical body. The human spirit is not an immortal soul. It does not continue to live when the human being dies. The concept that man’s soul is immortal is as wrong as the concept that man’s spirit continues to live consciously after death.

When a person dies, his body returns to dust. But the spirit of man

the Son has eternal life; he who does NOT OBEY the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him." God won't even give us His Holy Spirit—the guarantee or down payment for eternal life (Ephesians 1:13–14)—if we show Him that we do not want to be obedient to Him (Acts 5:32).

It is the clear teaching throughout the Bible that we must obey God (Romans 1:5; 16:26; Acts 6:7). We are still obligated to uphold God's Law (Matthew 19:17; Hebrews 5:8–9; John 15:10, 14). This means, for example, that we do observe God's weekly and annual Holy Days, and that we REFUSE to observe those days "in God's honor," which are of pagan origin. God tells us clearly not to worship Him in the way in which pagans worshipped their gods (Deuteronomy 12:29–32).

### *Religious Holidays of Pagan Origin*

It can be easily ascertained that many religious holidays of orthodox Christianity are of pagan origin. This includes the celebrations of Sunday, Christmas, Easter ("Good Friday" and "Easter Sunday"), New Year's Day and Valentine's Day. Additional unbiblical "Christian" holidays with incorrect teachings attached to them include Catholic holidays, such as Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and All Saint's Day (which was adopted from the Satanic festival of Halloween), just to name a few.

The biblical teaching is clear: We are to keep ONLY those days as RELIGIOUS days of worship that are commanded, or at least permitted in the Bible, and we are not to ADD religious days of worship which are not commanded in Scripture and which are contrary to biblical teachings. The same applies to days and seasons that might not be designated as Christian holidays per se, but which are observed by the "Christian" world, even though they are pagan in nature, such as St. Patrick's Day and Carnival celebrations, as well as school preparations for the Easter and Christmas holidays. (Please read our free booklets, "Is That in the Bible? Man's Holidays and God's Holy Days" and "Don't Keep Christmas.")

### *False Theory of Evolution*

We also reject the concept of the Theory of Evolution, which postulates that we are, in effect, part of the animal kingdom. God created

We are clearly told in God's Word that we are to preach *this* gospel message of the Kingdom of God, and all that it entails, as a witness. This means, we are not to try to convert others to the Truth, since we understand that God must call someone to the Truth and that He must give the person the spiritual capability of understanding the Truth.

### **No Proselytizing**

Accordingly, we say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under "Proselytizing":

"We do not believe in proselytizing. Therefore, we do not seek members by having people standing on street corners or going around neighborhoods knocking on doors. We carry out our various projects in an effort to freely give to all people regardless of their race, nationality, or religious affiliation. We believe in the godly way of helping others by providing the financial means by tithing and voluntary contributions."

Rather than trying to proselytize or "convert" others, we are told to preach the gospel *as a witness*. The Greek word for "witness" is *marturion*, and means, literally, "witness" or "testimony." This word is also used in Acts 4:33 where we read that "with great power the apostles gave *witness* to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

### *Giving Witness*

A related Greek word, *marturia*, is also used in John 3:11 where Christ says to Nicodemus: "We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not believe Our *witness*."

In addition, Christ says the following in John 5:36: "But I have a greater *witness* [*marturia*] than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness [*martureo*] of Me, that the Father has sent Me."

Another related Greek word is *martus*, which is also translated as "witness." In Acts 1:8, Christ says to His apostles: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be *witnesses* to Me [or: "My witnesses"] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Peter confessed that he and the other apostles and disciples were

witnesses of Christ's murder and His resurrection (Acts 2:32; 5:32; 13:31); as well as Christ's very life as a human being (Acts 10:39, 41). In addition, Paul was commissioned to be Christ's witness (Acts 22:14–15; 26:16).

Since the Church has the commission today to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness, it too must speak with power of the things that it knows and has seen. Nobody has literally seen Jesus Christ today, but those who have God's Spirit dwelling within them have "seen" and "experienced" and "tasted" the powers of the age to come and the "good word of God" (Hebrews 6:4–5), and they have "known and believed" God's love for us (1 John 4:16). They are to testify of the entire gospel message of the Kingdom with conviction and zeal, fully believing everything that the Bible reveals about it (Acts 24:14; 2 Corinthians 4:13). Their message must be proclaimed with boldness and clarity so that others, whom God wants to call, may come to the faith and believe (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

### *Preaching in All the World*

We are also told that once the gospel has been preached as a witness in all the world, then the end of this present evil age will come and Christ will return. Today, the Church of God preaches the true gospel in all the world, mainly through the various means of the Internet and fulfilling requests for hard-copy material.

This does not mean that every single person on this planet must have heard the gospel message. We read in Isaiah 66:19 that some will not have heard about God's fame prior to Christ's return. Christ also tells His disciples that they will not have been able to reach all the cities of Israel prior to His return (Matthew 10:23). God will decide when the Church's commission of preaching the gospel in all the world has been sufficiently accomplished so that He can send His Son back to the earth. The Greek word for "world" is *oikoumene* and can be described as the habitable earth or land. Sometimes, the Bible uses this word and the term "all the world" or similar expressions in a generic sense; notice this in Luke 2:1; John 12:19 ("kosmos" in the Greek for "world"); Acts 11:28; 17:6; 24:5 and Romans 10:18.

Some may think that Christ will not come back for a long time because, in accordance with their view, the gospel has not been preached

## Chapter 7

### Mortal Man

Very few believe the Bible when it tells us what man is.

#### **Man's Mortal Nature**

We say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under "Human's Mortal Nature":

"We believe that humans are mortal and subject to death, and that they can only obtain immortality through a gift from God."

When man ("the soul") dies, he ("it") is dead (Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Psalm 22:29, *Authorized Version*). Man does not possess an immortal soul. His soul does not go to heaven (or hell or purgatory); rather, the soul (the person) sleeps the sleep of death without any consciousness. To become alive again, he ("the soul") must be resurrected from the dead (Revelation 20:4). Man has no consciousness in death (Psalm 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isaiah 38:18–19).

At this point, the only MAN who has obtained immortality through the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3–4) is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:14–16; compare Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 1:18). But God offers all of mankind eternal life and immortality. Romans 6:23 tells us that eternal life is the gift of God. Those who accept and obey Christ and receive God's Holy Spirit will inherit eternal life at the time of Christ's return to this earth (Mark 10:29–30; John 10:27–28; 17:1–2). Others will be given this opportunity later, in the Millennium and during the Great White Throne Judgment period.

#### **God Must Give Us Eternal Life**

But God will only give us eternal life if we obey Him, and He will not give us immortality if we refuse to obey Him (Romans 2:5–11). John 3:36 says, in the *Revised Standard Version*: "He who believes in



yet in all the world. But their thoughts may not be God's thoughts, and we are warned that Christ will return when we do not expect it (Matthew 24:42, 44).

The Church of God must be watchful and zealous in fulfilling its commission of preaching the gospel. It must be committed to doing the Work of God (James 1:25). It must not become complacent and detracted, losing the focus on the most important Work of preaching the gospel by perhaps *replacing it* with other pursuits; such as trying to make this world a better place by voting in governmental elections; joining the military; or by performing "missionary works" in Third World countries.

all things (Revelation 22:5). This will be the KINGDOM OF GOD ruling over creation, with God's plan for mankind having been completed.

For more information on the subject of this chapter, please read our free booklets, "The Meaning of God's Spring Holy Days" and "The Meaning of God's Fall Holy Days."

the SECOND resurrection—the resurrection of those who will live again AFTER the thousand years are finished.

Most of the dead, who were not in the first resurrection, will be in the second resurrection—a resurrection to physical life. They will be taught God’s Way of Life and they will then be judged according to their works. Jesus Christ will be their Judge (Acts 17:30–31). It does not say expressly that they are judged based on the works that they did in their prior life, although this might be included.

### *The Third Resurrection*

Sadly, though, there are those who have had their chance, but have rejected it. At one time, they knew and understood perfectly well that they had to submit to Christ, but they permanently refused to do so. In most cases, they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, but they had subsequently lost it. They became bitter, hateful, resentful and malicious. They made the unchangeable decision NEVER to repent again!

If a person has reached the stage that he can no longer repent because he has made a firm decision NOT to repent, then God will not force repentance on such a person. God grants repentance, but a person must want to receive it. A person who maliciously rejects Christ, would only continue to live in misery and pain, and that is why God will save such a person from eternal misery by destroying him in a lake of fire.

After those described in Revelation 20:11–12 are resurrected in a second resurrection, a third category of people is addressed in verses 13–15. These will be raised in a third resurrection, to receive their sentence and be thrown into the lake of fire—to be exterminated, permanently. This is another truth, which *virtually nobody outside the Church of God understands* (and even some in the Church of God who once understood this truth of a third resurrection have rejected it as well).

*Nowhere does the Bible teach an everlasting hell fire* in which the “souls” of the unrepentant sinners would be tortured forever and ever. Rather, the soul is mortal—the soul IS the person. Those in the third resurrection will be resurrected to physical life to be DESTROYED in the lake of fire.

Those who will have become immortal born-again members in the very Family of God, will rule with God and Christ for all eternity over

## Chapter 4

### The Commission of the Church — Warning the Nations

In the first three chapters of this booklet, we discussed our belief in the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures; our doctrinal foundation; and our Church government. We also emphasized that while the Church of God is a spiritual organism, this fact does not exclude the necessity of physical organizations. In that context, we showed the importance of the Church’s correct biblical name. We also began to explain Christ’s commission to His Church; that is, to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness. We showed what is meant by the terms, “gospel,” “the Kingdom of God,” “to all nations,” and “as a witness.”

In this chapter, we will address another aspect of the Church’s commission; i.e., *to warn the nations*.

#### **The Church’s Commission—A Warning Message**

As pointed out in our **Statement of Beliefs** under “The Church’s Commission”:

“We believe that it is the Church’s commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness, to warn all nations, and especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel (mainly in the United States, Great Britain, certain Commonwealth nations and nations in Northwestern Europe) of impending danger, and to feed the flock of Christ—the Church—spiritually and physically.”

Part of the gospel message is a warning proclamation. It is the responsibility of the Church of God to warn all nations of impending danger (Isaiah 34:1–3), especially the lost tribes of the house of Israel (Ezekiel 3:17–21; 33:2–11). Emphasis is placed on the house of Israel because God had chosen them to be a good example to the

rest of the world; unfortunately, they failed miserably in this regard (Exodus 19:5–6; Ezekiel 20:5–32). As a result, God will deal with them first, after having given them a prior warning. But a specific warning must also go out to all nations, because God will deal with them subsequently (Isaiah 24:5–6; 28:22). In addition, a warning message must even go out to members and prospective members of the Church of God (Colossians 1:28; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

### *Modern Identity of Israel and Judah*

In order to warn the nations of the house of Israel (and, by extension, the modern house of Judah), it is necessary to know who they are today. This knowledge is also one of the *distinguishing signs* of the difference between the Church of God and most other church groups who claim to be Christian. They are unaware of who and where the modern tribes of the house of Israel are, or that a warning message must be given to them today, prior to Christ's return.

As we state in our **Statement of Beliefs**, the lost tribes of the house of Israel can be found today in the USA (where we find descendants of Manasseh, the first-born son of Joseph and grandson of Jacob or Israel); the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa (all descendants of Ephraim, the second son of Joseph); parts of France (descendants of Reuben, Jacob's first-born son); Denmark and Ireland (descendants of Dan, one of Jacob's twelve sons); Norway and Iceland (descendants of Benjamin, another one of Jacob's twelve sons); The Netherlands (descendants of Zebulon, one of Jacob's twelve sons); Finland (descendants of Issachar, one of Jacob's twelve sons); Switzerland (descendants of Gad, one of Jacob's twelve sons); Belgium and Luxembourg (descendants of Asher, one of Jacob's twelve sons); and Sweden (descendants of Naphtali, one of Jacob's twelve sons).

In addition, modern descendants of Jacob's son Levi might be found today in Wales; and descendants of Simeon and Levi might also be found in Scotland. Furthermore, a warning message must go out to the modern descendants of the house of Judah—the Jewish people.

### *Warning to "Gentile" Nations*

But as we said, the warning message must also be given to

for the Holy Days, and for necessary Church-related Feast expenses (such as hall rentals). As mentioned, the Second Tithe is mainly for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, but it can also be used, in addition, for other Holy Days (such as appropriate costs for travel and restaurants), as long as sufficient funds remain for the Feast of Tabernacles.

### ***The Last Great Day***

We explain in our **Statement of Beliefs** that we also keep one more Holy Day:

*"The Last Great Day* which immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles, once a year. This day symbolizes a 100-year period called the 'Great White Throne Judgment,' during which all persons who have ever lived and who were never called by God for salvation during this life, will have their first opportunity to accept Christ as their Savior (Leviticus 23:36; John 7:37; Revelation 20:11–12). At the end of that period, there will be a judgment during which all people who have ever lived and who have refused to accept Christ as their Savior, will be finally condemned to eternal death and destroyed in Gehenna fire (Revelation 20:13–15)."

During the entire time of the Feast of Tabernacles *and* the Last Great Day, Church members stay in temporary housing (such as hotels) at one of the designated Feast sites.

### ***The Second Resurrection***

The final annual Holy Day of the Last Great Day, which immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles, symbolizes a period of—most likely—100 years (Isaiah 65:20), called the "Great White Throne Judgment" (Revelation 20:11–12). This is the time during which all persons who had not been called before will be resurrected to physical life and will then be given their first real opportunity to accept or to reject God's calling (John 7:37).

The fact that the Bible reveals more than just one resurrection is *neither understood nor believed* by many professing Christians, let alone the rest of the world, but Revelation 20:4–6, 11–12 clearly describes

restore what had been taken away through Satan's rebellion and what Adam and Eve failed to restore (see Daniel 7:27). We celebrate this unique and unparalleled time in the entire history of mankind every year for seven days when we observe the Feast of Tabernacles (see John 7:2–14).

The first day of that seven-day Festival is to be observed as an annual Holy Day. The entire time will be observed in "temporary housings" such as hotels or motels, and barring extraordinary circumstances (such as poor health), members of the Church should be assembling at and attending one of the designated Feast sites of the Church for the entire time. The idea of just building a "booth" in which to eat a meal, while otherwise living in our homes during the entire time, is not biblical.

### *Tithe for the Feast*

In order to be able to finance staying in hotels and eating in restaurants for the entire time of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day (discussed below), God has instituted the concept of a SECOND Tithe (or a second ten percent of one's earnings or other income). This is an additional tithe of one's "increase" (Deuteronomy 14:22–26).

The *Soncino* commentary confirms that Deuteronomy 14:23 discusses the Second Tithe. They state: "This refers to the second tithe, because the first tithe was to be given to the Levites who were allowed to eat it anywhere (cf. Num. xviii. 26, 31)." The *Ryrie Study Bible* has a similar comment pertaining to Deuteronomy 14:22–27, confirming the existence of a "second tithe." So does *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, copyright 1970, on page 220: "This is the so-called 'second tithe,' as contrasted with that tithe of the produce given to maintain the Levites (see Nu. 18:26–28)."

The individual who wants to obey God by keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in the correct way saves the Second Tithe each year for his or her use in observing God's annual Holy Days, mainly the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, as members are commanded to travel to one of God's designated Feast sites. This tithe is to be saved for use by the individual. Only "excess second tithe"—the portion of the Second Tithe exceeding appropriate individual use—should be sent to the Church. The "excess second tithe" can be used by the Church for members who were unable to save sufficient Second Tithe

non-Israelite peoples as well, which would include powerful nations such as Germany and Austria (modern Assyria); Italy (in part, descendants of the ancient Chaldeans and Babylonians); and countries such as Russia, China, Japan, India, nations in the Middle East, Africa and South America. It will remain to be seen whether, and to what extent, such a warning will reach some of the non-Israelite or "Gentile" nations prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

In addition, the message must be proclaimed about what is prophesied for the descendants of the house of Israel and the entire world *if the warning is not heeded*. God's Church is able to announce this, as Christ leads and inspires it, and Christ's Spirit is a spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10; compare Amos 3:7–8; John 16:13; Isaiah 44:26; 1 Corinthians 13:2).

### *When to Proclaim?*

To be clear, the warning message must precede the time of the beginning of the Great Tribulation (*which will NOT last longer than three-and-a-half years*; there is NO reference in the Bible saying that it would last for seven years, as some teach) and of the Day of the Lord (which may last for about one year, compare Isaiah 34:8; 61:2; 63:4, equating a day with a year, beginning no later than about two-and-a-half years after the start of the Great Tribulation). It is true that the warning message *will continue* to be given during those times, especially through the testimony and prophecies of the "two witnesses" (Revelation 11:3–6). Finally, when the two witnesses have completed their testimony, they will be killed in Jerusalem (showing that they are *human beings* and not angels), and after three-and-a-half days they will be resurrected to immortal life as God beings in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:7–13).

This resurrection will be part of the *first resurrection*, when all true Christians will enter eternal life and meet the returning Christ in the air, in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Matthew 24:30; 26:64), to descend together on that same day to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4–5). *The Bible does not teach*, nor do we believe, that the returning Christ and His resurrected saints, who will meet Him in the air, *will ascend to Heaven* and then return to this earth at a later time.

### *Satan's Wrath and Protection of the Church*

Today's warning message of the Church is directed especially at the tribes of the house of Israel, as well as the Jewish people, who will both be defeated in war and will either be killed or enslaved. This will occur at and will constitute the very beginning of the Great Tribulation which can also be described as Satan's wrath against Israel (Luke 21:20–24).

It is also prophesied that Satan's wrath will be directed, at the same time, against God's Church—spiritual Israel—and a martyrdom will occur for many of God's people (Revelation 6:9–11; 7:13–14; 12:11–12, 17). Other members of the true Church of God will be protected during that time at a physical location or "place of safety" here on earth (Revelation 12:13–16; 3:10). The Bible might give some indication as to how God's people who are worthy of protection will reach this place of safety, but it is useless to prepare for it in a physical way or contemplate where it might be and how to get there, as God will "work out the specifics."

As we stated, the warning message must also go out to all nations who will be involved, either directly or indirectly, with attacking Israel (Zechariah 14:2–3, 12–15), and even though God has decreed that Israel and Judah are to be punished, this does not make Israel's enemies any more righteous (Habakkuk 1:13). While at the very end all nations (including Russia and China) will be involved in attacking Jerusalem, the original onslaught will occur through ten European nations or groups of nations (Daniel 2:40–44; Revelation 17:12–13) under the leadership of a charismatic political military leader, the "beast," who will work together with a worldwide religious system, "Babylon the Great," under their religious leader, the "false prophet."

### *Ten European Core Nations or Groups of Nations*

The Church of God understands and believes that the confederacy of ten European nations or groups of nations will occur under "Assyrian" leadership (Isaiah 10:5–7, 12, 24–25; 30:30–33; 31:8–9). The future "King of Assyria" is also identified as "King Jareb," the "king of the North" and the "beast." This coming European power bloc will fight a nuclear war against America and Great Britain, leading to the destruction of all major cities in those countries (Ezekiel 6:6).

The Church of God has proclaimed for a long time that Germany

"The *Day of Atonement* once a year by refraining from partaking of any and all solid food or liquid for a period of 24 hours. This day symbolizes those called by God during this life, having received at-one-ment with God; those who can receive at-one-ment with God after Christ's return; and the transfer of sin to Satan as the one who is ultimately responsible for all sin (Leviticus 16:1–34; Leviticus 23:27–32; Acts 27:9)."

This is not God's world, but it is Satan the Devil's world. In order to bring perfect peace and happiness to this earth, Satan—the archenemy of God and man—will have to be removed from his power over this earth (compare Revelation 2:13). Only then can man truly become "at one" with God. God created the annual Holy Day of Atonement to foreshadow the event of Satan's removal in the near future (Romans 16:20). In order to impress on us the seriousness of this event, we are commanded to *fast for 24 hours* (note that people with serious health concerns should consult a doctor before fasting, and young children should not be compelled to fast.)

### *The Feast of Tabernacles*

Following the "Day of Atonement," we state in our **Statement of Beliefs** that we observe:

"The *Feast of Tabernacles* once a year, for seven consecutive days, by attending one of the Church's designated sites around the world. This period symbolizes the reign of Christ for 1,000 years, together with His saints made immortal, during which time Satan will be bound and the entire world will be living under the government of God (Leviticus 23:33–35; Daniel 7:27; John 7:2–8, 10–14; Revelation 20:4)."

After Satan has been removed, Christ and His saints will begin the awesome task of restoring all things on earth. Those who qualify will rule with Christ on this earth (not from heaven over this earth) for 1,000 years (the "Millennium") (Revelation 20:4), governing those human beings who survived the incredible time of suffering just prior to Christ's return, as well as those who will be born during the Millennium.

Under Christ's leadership—and along with Him—the saints will

by Him” (Acts 10:35; compare Acts 10:45; 11:18).

The Feast of Pentecost also teaches us that we are *not yet born again*, when we receive the Holy Spirit at the time of our proper baptism; but that we are Spirit-*begotten* children of God. Our Spirit *birth* will occur later.

### ***The Feast of Trumpets***

We proceed to state in our **Statement of Beliefs** that we observe as the next Holy Day:

*“The Feast of Trumpets once a year. This day symbolizes the soon coming return of Jesus Christ to this earth (Leviticus 23:24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), and our resurrection or change to immortality, to be born again into the Kingdom or Family of God (1 Corinthians 15:50–54, 42–49; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; John 3:3, 5–8).”*

The Feast of Trumpets must be seen in connection with the Feast of Pentecost, as Pentecost reminds us that only very few are chosen at this time to receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit and to prepare for the time when God will replace Satan and restore His government on and over all the earth (Revelation 5:10). These few are being taught and trained by God so that they can later teach mankind to submit to God’s authority. That time of massive re-education will begin when Jesus Christ returns—in great power and great glory—as the KING of kings and the LORD of lords.

*He is coming back once (not twice; a secret rapture is nowhere taught in Scripture) to restore ALL THINGS on this earth. God wants us to keep the annual Holy Day of the Feast of Trumpets as a reminder of the monumental future event of Christ’s return. Those in Christ still alive when He returns will be changed to immortality, and those who have died in Christ will be resurrected from the dead to eternal life. This will be the time when we will be *born again*; when we will be *born of the Spirit*; when we will BE Spirit (John 3:6).*

### ***Day of Atonement***

Following the Feast of Trumpets is the “Day of Atonement,” which we observe, as we state in our **Statement of Beliefs**:

(who was defeated in World War II and was subsequently divided into East and West Germany) would unite and become the most powerful nation in Europe; that Great Britain would ultimately leave the EU, while Italy would not leave; that the euro would stay; that Europe would build a powerful army; and that the relationship between the USA and Europe, especially Germany, would deteriorate.

### ***The European Religious System***

We understand that the prophesied European religious system has nothing to do with Islam, but that it is a false belief and practice of Christianity, which is described as a fallen woman, as she and her daughters fell away from true and pure Christianity (Revelation 17:1–6, 15, 18; 18:23–24). We also understand that this religious system has been working together with the European political system for many centuries, known as “revivals of the ancient Holy Roman Empire,” under Justinian; Charles the Great; Otto the Great; Charles V; Napoleon; and Hitler and Mussolini, successively. None of that can be said in any way about Islam, which played no role in the above-mentioned revivals and which did not depart from true Christianity. In fact, it never knew nor accepted true Christianity to begin with. (For more information, please read our free booklets, “Europe in Prophecy” and “The Ten European Revivals of the ancient Roman Empire.”)

### ***The Coming Falling Away***

We also understand that just prior to Christ’s return, the false prophet or the man of sin will occupy the future temple of God in Jerusalem, claiming to be God, and that this will occur at the time of an end-time falling away from biblical Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:1–4). The religious Babylonian system did not teach or preach the Truth for almost two thousand years. Therefore, it is clear that the *falling away* cannot and does not refer to the Babylonian system which is getting “bigger,” but that *it must refer to a falling away of true Christians from biblical Truth*. This, in turn, sheds some light on the fact that God will allow a final martyrdom against some of His people (Daniel 7:25–27; Revelation 13:7), in order to wake them up and make them realize their lack of zeal for His Law and His Work, or even their temporary departure from God’s Way which they once understood and lived.

### *No Seven-Year Contract between the Beast and Arab Nations*

We also know from the Bible that the last revival of the ancient Roman Empire will at first temporarily collaborate, to an extent, with Arab nations and Turkey against Israel (Psalm 83:1–8). However, there is no biblical suggestion that a seven-year contract will be entered into between the “beast” and Arab nations, which would then be broken after three-and-a-half years.

The passage that is sometimes quoted for this proposition—Daniel 9:27—does not refer to such an end-time physical covenant, but to the death of Jesus Christ in the middle of the week (Wednesday, when He was crucified) after His three-and-a-half year public ministry, thereby doing away with or “bringing to an end” the sacrificial system, as well as confirming the spiritual New Covenant with His people for one prophetic week or seven years. (Christ will fulfill the remaining three-and-a-half years of His seven-year ministry when He returns to this earth.) It is revealed however that the European invasion of the Holy Land will occur when animal sacrifices will be brought there by the Jews, apparently during or after the completed construction of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount (Daniel 8:11–14; 11:31; 12:11–12).

And so, God will proceed in punishing the “Gentile” nations, and especially the “beast power,” during the Day of the Lord. The two witnesses and those supporting them will continue the warning during that time, a warning that will be directed to all the nations (Revelation 8:13; 14:6–11), as well as to those Israelites who have survived the nuclear attacks and are, by then, prisoners in concentration camps or slave laborers in areas occupied by the modern Roman Empire.

The warning message to be proclaimed has to do with the need to change; to repent of sin (Revelation 9:20–21; 16:9–11) and turn to righteousness. This world does not seem to know what sin is, especially the so-called “Christian” world which believes the lie that “grace” somehow supersedes the need to keep God’s Law.

### **Law, Sin and Love**

In our **Statement of Beliefs**, we say under “Law, Sin and Love”:

“We believe that sin is the transgression of the Law, and hence we strive to keep the Law as summed up in the word, ‘love’ (Romans 13:10). Love involves two great principles of love

of the 15th day of the first month (after sundown on the First Day of Unleavened Bread) when members gather together for an evening meal. On that occasion, they reflect in their minds on how the events of the exodus of ancient Israel (when they came out of physical slavery in Egypt) foreshadowed their spiritual exodus from their slavery to sin (Exodus 12:42; Numbers 33:3).

Unfortunately, today’s Jewish community is totally confused about the distinction between the Passover night and the Night to Be Much Observed. In fact, they keep the PASSOVER at the *END* of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th day, *TOGETHER WITH* the Night to Be Much Observed, as if the two events were one and the same. But these are two separate events that are to be observed at two separate times. Scripture commands that the *Passover* is to be observed at the *BEGINNING* of the 14th day, while the *Night to Be Much Observed* is to be kept at the beginning of the 15th day—one entire day *LATER!* God said that at the *END* of the 14th day (or the beginning of the 15th day) unleavened bread is to be eaten until the *END* of the 21st day—that is, for seven days (Exodus 12:18).

### **Feast of Pentecost**

We continue to explain in our **Statement of Beliefs** that as the next annual Holy Day, we observe:

“The *Feast of Pentecost* once a year. This day symbolizes the coming of God’s Holy Spirit for the purpose of converting those called by God at this time (Leviticus 23:15–16, 21; Acts 2:1–4; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8).”

The Church of God understands and teaches that only very few are called today to salvation, which fact is pictured by the Feast of Pentecost or the Feast of the Firstfruits (Exodus 23:16; compare James 1:18; Romans 8:23; Revelation 14:4). While there is much confusion in the Christian and Jewish world regarding the correct date of Pentecost, the Church of God determines it by counting 50 days from the Sunday [after the weekly Sabbath], on which the wave sheaf was offered and which falls within the annual Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, as instructed in the Bible (Leviticus 23:11). The Feast of Pentecost also tells us that today, both “Jews and Gentiles” are called; that is, “in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted



Days of Unleavened Bread symbolizes our commitment to live a sinless life (Leviticus 23:6–8; Acts 20:6; 1 Corinthians 5:7–8).”

While we observe the entire seven days by avoiding leavened products, only the first and the last day of this seven-day period are annual Holy Days. Numerous Scriptures tell us to remove leavened bread from our houses before the Days of Unleavened Bread begin, and not to eat leavened bread during these seven days. At the same time, we are told to eat unleavened bread during these days. Biblical passages containing this command can be found in Exodus 12:15–20; 13:7; 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 23:6; Numbers 28:17; and Deuteronomy 16:3, 8.

As a general rule, we are to eat unleavened bread every day during the Days of Unleavened Bread (barring emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances), as we are to replace sin (symbolized by leaven) with righteousness (symbolized by unleavened bread). Compare 1 Corinthians 5:6–8; Luke 12:1; Matthew 16:12. Even those who normally do not eat bread should still eat a little bit of unleavened bread every day during the Days of Unleavened Bread (in addition to their normal food which does not have to consist of bread at all, but the food must not contain leavened products of any kind), in order to remind them of the symbolism conveyed during those seven days.

The Church of God has never taught that beverages [such as beer or wine] or items not meant for food or fit for human consumption [such as dog food, tooth paste, fire extinguishers, cleaning material, medication] are to be removed. In addition, though, the Church of God has consistently preached and taught that certain “leavening agents,” which the Jews do not remove, SHOULD BE removed. These leavening agents include baking soda and baking powder, but not “brewer’s yeast,” “yeast extracts,” or “cream of tartar.” Whether or not baking soda or baking powder are active agents, they would clearly be used as a substitute for leavening to puff up any flour or meal product, thereby violating the spirit of God’s commands.

We have prepared an extensive [list of products](#) that should be removed and avoided during the Days of Unleavened Bread (see [Appendix C](#)).

### ***The Night to Be Much Observed***

The Church also keeps the Night to Be Much Observed at the *beginning*

towards God and love towards neighbor. The Ten Commandments compose the ten points of the Law (Matthew 22:37–39; James 2:8–11).”

### ***Keeping the Commandments***

We do not believe by any means that Jesus came to abolish the Law of God or fulfill it for us so that we do not have to keep it anymore. Sin is the transgression of the spiritual Law (1 John 3:4 in the *Authorized Version*; compare Romans 7:14); that is, the Ten Commandments and the statutes and judgments, which explain the Ten Commandments even further. It is true that Jesus *did away with the sacrificial system of washings and rites*, and therefore, the Church of God strongly rejects any attempts by “Christian” groups to uphold and teach superseded Old Testament temporary laws, including ritual washings, animal sacrifices or physical circumcision (compare Galatians 5:2).

On the other hand, Christ made very clear that we must keep the commandments of the spiritual Law (1 John 2:4; 5:3; 2 John 6, 10). James clarified that when we break one of the Ten Commandments, we are guilty of having broken them all (James 2:8–12). The concept of grace does not teach us something differently.

### ***Grace and Works***

We state in our **Statement of Beliefs** under “Grace and Works”:

“We believe that true Christians are saved by God’s grace, not according to their works (Ephesians 2:8–9), but that their reward is dependent on the good works they perform (Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12).”

Christ died for us, to forgive us our sins and pay the penalty for our sins, the penalty of eternal death (Romans 6:23). Christ did this because of grace—unmerited pardon. There is nothing we did to have compelled Christ to die for us; we certainly did not deserve His death for us. Nothing we did made us worthy of Christ’s death. However, accepting His Sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins does not mean that we can now trample Him underfoot and spit at Him by ignoring and violating God’s Law.

Grace is not a license to sin (Jude 4). After having received forgiveness

of our past sins by grace, we are then obligated to live righteously; that is, we must avoid sin with all our might so that the righteousness demanded by the Law can be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:3–4). We know also that we cannot be victorious on our own, but that it must be Jesus Christ living in us through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). It is Christ who empowers us to overcome our evil human carnal nature, this sin-stricken world and Satan the Devil. The idea that we can sin so that grace may abound is strongly condemned in the Bible (Romans 6:1–2).

As true Christians, we will show through our good works—how we live—that we are in God’s eyes “counted worthy” of protection and eternal life (Luke 21:36; 20:35). It is Christ in us who makes us worthy when we follow His lead and submit to Him. Christ gave His Church a work to do, the work of proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom in all the world as a witness. And the degree of our reward (not eternal life which will be granted us as a free gift) is indeed dependent upon how well we are doing with what we have been given (1 Corinthians 3:8; 2 John 8; Revelation 22:12).

Why then do so many professing Christians believe the lie that Christ came to abolish the Law and that we are “saved” once and for all, no matter how we live? The answer is that the *whole world is deceived*. And it is Satan and his demons who are responsible for this worldwide deception (Revelation 12:9; 16:14; compare also 1 John 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:14–15; 1 Timothy 4:1)!

We understand that this is not God’s world, but that Satan and his demons are the present rulers of this world (Ephesians 6:12).

### **Angels and Demons**

We say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Angels”:

“We believe in the existence of holy angels, who faithfully serve God. We also believe that there are ‘fallen’ angels who are in rebellion to God, and who are referred to in Scripture as Satan and his demons.”

You can find detailed information about the existence and the activities of angels and demons in our free booklet, “Angels, Demons and the Spirit World.”

The fact that this is not God’s world and that it is presently under

After the 24-hour Passover day had begun at sunset, Jesus changed the symbol of the Passover lamb to the symbols of footwashing, bread and wine. Subsequently, He was betrayed and arrested that same night, and He was beaten and killed during the daylight portion of the Passover day. He was laid in the grave just before sunset at the end of the Passover day. The entire 24-hour day of the Passover is not a Holy Day per se, in that we are not required to keep the entire Passover day holy, but the service at the beginning of the Passover evening is holy time.

The Passover is only to be observed by properly baptized persons who have received the Holy Spirit (those who are spiritually circumcised, Colossians 2:11–14); otherwise, they would partake of it in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).

[This is the **ONLY** service of the Church that is for baptized Church members only. Otherwise, as we point out in our section “About Us” and in our “Policy Statement” (note **Appendix B**) that “we welcome guests to our Church services, as long as they are not contentious and will worship with us in peace and harmony and in accordance with our doctrines and practices.”]

The Passover is observed *once a year* as a memorial. The concept of *keeping it more often throughout the year*, perhaps calling it “communion” or the “Lord’s Supper,” is *not biblical* and constitutes partaking of the “Passover” in an unworthy manner. Also, the Passover is to be observed with UNLEAVENED bread and red wine, not grape juice. Finally, the Passover is to be kept at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, NOT at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan or the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, and it is NOT to be kept as a meal.

### **The Days of Unleavened Bread**

We continue to explain in our **Statement of Beliefs** that we observe:

“The *Days of Unleavened Bread* once a year by not partaking of any food prepared with leaven for a period of seven days following the Passover [We would like to comment here that it is not commanded to abstain from leavened products during the Passover day; however, as mentioned above, the piece of bread which will be partaken of during the Passover service must be unleavened, as it symbolizes the sinless body of Christ]. The partaking of the unleavened bread during the

## *Oracles of God*

It is important to realize that the weekly Sabbath is a Holy Day, which lasts from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. God reckons each day beginning at sunset and continuing through until the following sunset. We know from the Jewish people when to keep the Sabbath. It is the Jews to whom God committed His revelations or His “oracles,” as Paul clearly explains in Romans 3:1–2. These “oracles of God” included the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as the knowledge of the seven-day week and of the Sacred Calendar. (As mentioned before, we accept the Sacred Calendar as used by the Jewish community, and reject the idea of having to create our own calendar. Many have tried to do so without godly authority, and hopeless confusion has been the result.)

The Jews preserved the knowledge of which day of the week is the seventh day. Without an understanding of when a week begins and ends, we would not have been able to tell from the Bible alone which day is actually the seventh day of the week. Today, the Jews keep the Sabbath on Saturday, beginning Friday evening, at sunset. Nobody questions today that the Sabbath, as preserved by the Jews, is the seventh or last day of the week. All understand [or should understand] that Sunday is the first day of the week.

Some few organizations may keep the weekly Sabbath, but they do not keep [any or most of] the annual Holy Days and Festivals. (For the correct dates of God’s annual Feast days, please note our Holy Day Calendar, which is published on our Website: [www.eternalgod.org](http://www.eternalgod.org), under “About Us” and “Holy Days.”)

## **Passover**

We continue in our **Statement of Beliefs** with a reference to the “Passover,” stating that we observe:

“The *Passover* once a year in the evening by engaging in a foot-washing service as an example of humility in accordance with Christ’s example, and partaking of the unleavened bread and wine, symbolizing physical and spiritual healing and forgiveness of sin. The entire service symbolizes a remembrance of Christ’s death (Leviticus 23:5; Luke 22:14–20; John 13:1–5; 1 Corinthians 11:20–29).”

Satan’s dominion does not mean that we are therefore permitted or obligated to rebel against the human rule of the country we might be living in. At the same time, we must not participate in any activity which is against God’s Law.

## **Civic Government**

To explain this sometimes delicate balance, we state this in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Civic Government”:

“We believe that we are to be subject to the government of our country and its laws (Romans 13:1–5; 1 Peter 2:13–17); that we are to pay our taxes (Matthew 22:17–21; Mark 12:14–17; Romans 13:6–7); that we are to pray for leaders of government (1 Timothy 2:1–3); and that we are to honor those leaders (1 Peter 2:17; Romans 13:7).”

## **Relationship with God**

However, we also state this in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Relationship with God”:

“We believe that a Christian’s duty to God is of a superior and higher nature than our duty arising from any human relationship (Acts 4:18–20; 5:27–29). We therefore, following biblical commands and principles, do not participate in voting for national elections or jury duty, and we do not join the military. On the other hand, we do not object to participation in civil service. If compelled by governments to enlist, we refuse to serve in any capacity that would violate the spirit of the sixth commandment against murder (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:43–48; Romans 12:17–21).”

Taking these passages together, we do not believe that we ought to resort to any violence against any governmental regime or rulership. Nor should we participate in wars or in any violent activity against anyone, foreign and domestic (Please read our free booklet, “Should You Fight in War?”).

We ought to pray for the leaders of our human government, and to honor and submit to those leaders (unless their directives violate God’s supreme Law), so that we, the people of God, can live a “quiet

and peaceable life” (1 Timothy 2:2) in order to fulfill our commission to preach God’s gospel—the gospel of the Kingdom of God—to all nations. This, of course, includes preaching a warning message to this sinful world, placing it on notice that this present evil world (Galatians 1:4) will end soon and that it will be replaced by a better world—“the world to come” (Hebrews 2:5), the wonderful world tomorrow, a truly peaceful Paradise here on earth.

## Chapter 6

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### God’s Holy Days

One of the *most distinguishing and defining differences* between most Christian organizations and the *Church of the Eternal God and its international affiliates* is the observance of the biblical Sabbath and the biblical annual Holy Days. In our **Statement of Beliefs**, we state the following, under “Observation of God’s Commanded Holy Days”:

“We believe that we are to observe certain weekly and annual Holy Days, during which time we are to attend Church services and to refrain from secular labor, including school, college or university attendance, and which time we are to dedicate and devote to worship, spiritual study, prayer, fellowship with Church members, and physical rest.”

This shows that the biblical Holy Days are sanctified by God, meaning that God set aside those days for a holy purpose. It is not for us to determine when certain times are holy, since only God can do so; and He has already decided this. God wants us to remember those days and to keep them holy. And so, we continue in our **Statement of Beliefs** to list those Holy Days, introducing them as follows: “These weekly and annual Holy Days are...”

#### ***The Weekly Sabbath***

We begin with the *weekly Sabbath*, showing that we observe:

“The seventh-day weekly Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The day symbolizes God’s resting on the seventh day, after having recreated the surface of the earth in six days, and the forthcoming Millennium which is also referred to as a Sabbath lasting for 1,000 years (Leviticus 23:3; Exodus 20:8–11; Hebrews 4:3–11).”

## Chapter 5

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### The Commission of the Church—Feeding the Flock

In this chapter, we will discuss the remaining aspect of the commission given to the Church, which is, as stated in our **Statement of Beliefs** under “The Church’s Commission,” “... to feed the flock of Christ—the Church—spiritually and physically.” The correct understanding of properly feeding the flock *distinguishes us substantially* from most other Church organizations.

#### *Feeding the Flock*

To begin with, we will address the responsibility of the Church to feed the flock *spiritually*. This task is foremost assigned to the ordained ministry of God’s Church. We discussed in previous chapters that the Church of God is a spiritual organism, which is physically organized.

#### *Feeding the Flock Spiritually*

We read in John 21:15–17:

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these [the multitude of fish which Peter had caught, compare verses 10–11]?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”

#### *The Ministry’s Responsibility*

The task of feeding Christ’s lambs and feeding and tending His sheep is primarily accomplished through the ministers’ inspired speaking

and teaching of God's Word, and through ministerial counseling. In this regard, the ministry is to look after and protect Christ's disciples by "feeding" and "tending" the flock, which includes standing up to "savage wolves" which might come in with the intent to spiritually destroy and devour the sheep (Acts 20:29; compare also John 10:11–13).

Matthew 24:45–46 adds this admonition: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them FOOD IN DUE SEASON? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find SO doing."

Ephesians 4, beginning with verse 11, says in the *Revised Standard Version*: "And His [Christ's] gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for THE WORK of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

As Spirit-begotten children, we must grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Truth (2 Peter 3:18). We are desirous of the pure milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:2), being nurtured by our "mother" (Galatians 4:26)—the Church of God—just as a new-born human child is fed and cared for by his or her human mother. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:11–16 that Christ gave to His Church ministers with the responsibility to feed and edify the flock, so that "we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (verse 14).

Brethren need Christ's ministers to be fed properly. Romans 10:14–16 tells us that we cannot hear "without a preacher." We are also told, however, that God must send the "preacher." We are encouraged to "test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets [or preachers] have gone into the world" (1 John 4:1).

In the first chapter of this booklet, we warned against deception, which is prophesied to occur—including within the Church of God. Feeding the flock includes a warning against deception, lying spirits and the falling away from the Truth. In Chapter 2 of this booklet, we continued to address the importance of not deviating from the Truth. To ensure that this doesn't happen, the ministry of God's Church has the duty to feed the flock by preaching the Truth in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

In Chapter 3, we discussed the Church's commission of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God in all the world as a witness.

Additionally, it would also be following a wrong principle to take out a loan in order to be able to pay Third Tithe. However, each individual is responsible before God to determine whether he or she is "poor" or "needy" and therefore excused from paying Third Tithe. The ministry is available to help with questions relating to such determination.

At the time of Moses, Third Tithe was paid in the third and sixth years out of a cycle of seven years. In the seventh year, no Third Tithe was to be paid, as the land rested during the seventh year (Leviticus 25:4). The principle of paying Third Tithe in the third and sixth years out of a cycle of seven years still applies today. Many members begin counting their Third Tithe years from the annual festival (usually the Feast of Tabernacles) nearest the date of their baptism. It is the responsibility of each member to decide when he or she should begin the cycle, and the observance of that cycle should be carefully maintained. (The ministry would be available to answer any questions as to how to determine someone's individual seven-year cycle.) God promises us His blessing if we pay Him His Third Tithe during the appropriate times (compare Deuteronomy 26:12–15).

Paying First and Third Tithe to the Church of God enables the ministry to fulfill the Church's commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which includes a warning message to all nations, as well as feeding those within the flock who are in need of financial help. Traditionally, God's Church has taught for many years that the Church can use Third Tithe income for First Tithe expenses, if the Church has enough Third Tithe funds to provide adequately for those of its members who need Third Tithe assistance. Conversely, it has been understood that if the Church does not have enough Third Tithe to help its needy members, it can use First Tithe income for this purpose.

## **Tithing**

We say in our **Statement of Beliefs**, under “Tithing”:

“We believe in the godly institution of tithing to enable the Church to carry out its commission of preaching the gospel and feeding the flock. We believe that needy members are to be helped and taken care of, including through the tithing system described in the Bible, by other members of the Church (Luke 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:8; James 2:15–16).”

### *Tithe for Proclaiming the Gospel*

There are two types or categories of tithing to be paid to the Church. (There is, in fact, another type of tithe, but that tithe is *not* to be paid to the Church. It is a tithe to be saved by the members for themselves in order to enable them to participate in observing God’s annual Holy Days. More about that in the next chapter. For detailed information, please read our free booklet, “Tithing—Today?”)

The first type of tithe to be paid to the Church deals with a payment of ten percent of one’s income or increase for the purpose of preaching the gospel. It is commonly referred to as the “First Tithe.” It is the first ten percent of one’s “increase,” referring to his or her job earnings and/or other income, such as proceeds from rentals, and interest or gains from stocks or other investments. It is to be sent to God’s Church to support the preaching of the gospel (compare Malachi 3:8–10; Matthew 23:23, note especially the last sentence). It is up to the member to decide whether to pay tithe from the gross (before taxes are deducted from the paycheck) or from the net (after deduction of taxes).

### *Tithe for the Poor*

The second type of tithe to be paid to the Church by those who are able to do so, is for the purpose of helping needy members. The tithe for those in need of support is commonly referred to as the “Third Tithe.”

It is **FOR** the poor and needy, not **BY** the poor and needy. It is, therefore, not necessary for a “poor” person to pay Third Tithe. Someone who receives assistance from the government does not have to pay Third Tithe (nor do they have to pay First Tithe from such assistance).

Having explained what the gospel is, it is clear that this commission is not to neglect the Church membership. Rather, preaching the gospel constitutes a necessary *part* of feeding the flock. In addition to the *preaching* of the gospel, the Church members are to be *taught* more fully by the ministry (Matthew 28:19–20).

We also stated in Chapter 4 that a warning message must go out to *members and prospective members of the Church of God*, including a message about prophecy, which will help them to see more clearly how close we are to Christ’s return.

### *Baptism and Laying on of Hands*

All of this requires a sincere, honest, dedicated and functioning ministry. In this context, the doctrine of laying on of hands (Hebrews 6:2) is extremely important, as it is an integral part of the Church’s commission to feed the flock.

There is no promise in the Bible that, since the foundation and establishment of the New Testament Church in 31 A.D., someone would receive the Holy Spirit without prior proper baptism as an adult—after repentance and belief in Christ’s Sacrifice and the gospel—and the laying on of hands by God’s ordained ministers (Acts 8:12–17; 19:5–6). This symbolic act sets the baptized person aside or sanctifies him or her for the divine purpose of receiving from God His Holy Spirit. Therefore, only ordained ministers of God should perform baptisms. Unordained members who decide to baptize others and “lay hands on them” (Acts 8:17–18; 19:5–6) should realize that they would not have a biblical basis to justify their action. This would be true, even if their particular Church organization, or a particular minister, may “authorize” such behavior, as it would not be supported by God’s written Word, and we must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29; 4:19).

### *Anointing the Sick*

Further, only God’s ministers were given special authority from God to lay their hands upon the sick when praying for them (while anointing them with oil). This is clearly taught in many passages, including James 5:14–15; Mark 6:13; Mark 16:18; Acts 9:17–18; and Acts 28:8.

In addition, if a personal ministerial visit is not possible, then God’s ordained ministers are permitted to use and pray over a cloth,

anointing it with a drop of oil as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, laying or placing their hands on the cloth, and asking God to heal the sick person who will receive this cloth. This is based on numerous passages in the Bible, including Acts 19:11–12, where it is shown that “God worked unusual miracles BY THE HANDS OF PAUL, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.” The reference to the “hands of Paul” seems to indicate that Paul laid his HANDS on the apron, anointed it with a drop of oil and prayed over it before sending it to the sick. This is the exact method used by God’s ministers today.

### *Church Weddings*

In the case of a proper Church wedding, the minister emphasizes the purpose of marriage, and the fact that the couple is entering into a life-long COVENANT with God. He places his hands on the couple, while asking God in prayer to sanctify the marriage and to set aside the couple for the holy purpose of the marriage relationship.

### *Blessing Little Children*

The Church of God sets aside a time during the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration to bless little children by the ministers placing their hands on them, and asking God to grant them His protection and guidance (compare Mark 10:16; Matthew 19:13–15).

### *Ordinations of Deacons and Ministers*

Ordinations of deacons, deaconesses and elders are done strictly through the ministry, and they are always accompanied by the laying on of hands, setting the ordained person aside for the godly office of a deacon, a deaconess or a minister (Acts 6:2–6; 1 Timothy 4:14; compare also 1 Timothy 5:22). Notice especially 2 Timothy 1:6: “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF MY HANDS.” This procedure is also applied when a deacon is raised to the office of an elder, and when an elder is raised to a higher rank within the ministry, such as pastor or evangelist.

The doctrine of laying on of hands requires and demands a functioning godly ministry, who are God’s representatives (Malachi 2:7),

if they are truly chosen and ordained by God (Hebrews 5:4). God has decreed that an ordained minister of God is necessary for: proper baptism (leading to receipt of the Holy Spirit); healing; Church weddings; the blessing of little children; and ordinations as deacons and elders. All of this serves the purpose of feeding the flock.

### *Willingness to Be Fed*

In order to successfully carry out this responsibility of feeding the flock, there must be a willingness of the Church members to be fed. One cannot feed someone if a person rejects the food. The ministry of God is here to serve and feed God’s sheep. God’s sheep will recognize the voice of God as it is being preached through His shepherds, and they will follow them (John 10:1–5). This is the attitude we ought to have toward God’s ministry, as so strongly and boldly put by John, an apostle of Jesus Christ: “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us” (1 John 4:6). Christ Himself said: “If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20). He also said: “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word” (John 17:20).

Someone who rejects God’s ministers, thinking that he has no need of them, is in mortal spiritual danger. Someone who is unwilling to submit to the ministry of God is guilty of rebellion, which is as bad as sorcery and witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23). Paul encouraged the brethren to follow him, as he followed Christ. He URGED the brethren to follow or imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:16). He said: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

He reminded the Thessalonians that they “became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6). Just as it is the duty and responsibility of God’s ministers to feed the flock and protect it from harm, the “sheep” and the “lambs” are told by God to accept and obey the guidance and protection from God’s true ministers (Hebrews 13:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:13–15).

### *Feeding the Flock Physically*

In addition to the commission to feed the flock *spiritually*, God’s Church needs to feed those within the flock *physically* who are in need of such help.