

March 18, 2026

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Many years ago, a minister in the Church of God, in a conversation after Sabbath services with a few brethren of which I was one, gave us some advice that has stayed with me for over half a century. It was just ten words and concerned the Way of Life that we had been called to, and, at the time, it sounded like great advice. He said: "You have to be sold on the Way of Life." It has since been invaluable to me.

I can't remember who was in that small informal gathering and whether they took such advice seriously. I still give that same advice to others wherever and whenever possible in order to ensure that they are encouraged and motivated to stay the course. Unfortunately, those of us who have been in the Church for many decades have seen such advice discarded or neglected with the result that many have left for differing reasons.

Why do I mention this brief conversation from the early 1970's? Because history has the knack of repeating itself and we have been warned over and over again in sermons, written material and from the Word of God. In Matthew 24:10, we read: "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold." However, in verses 13 and 14, we read: "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." We have to endure to the end of our lives or Christ's Return, and be about our Father's Work in getting the message out to a tired and destructive world.

We read about Jesus as a young person in Luke 2:49: "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?'" Even at that young age, His focus was laser sharp on what He had to do. Can we do any less?

Those who have left the Church in the past, those who are doing this now and will do so in the future as the Bible predicts, unless they were not called at this time, will miss out on living for eternity in the Kingdom and Family of God because they weren't sold on the Way of Life that God has called us to. As a long-time Church of God member and minister, I have seen the rejection of this advice by quite a number of people since I started attending Church all those years ago, and this has been repeated over and over again. Whether some, or all of them were ever really called, is something that we don't know but God does, as He knows the hearts and minds of all who have ever lived.

For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the Bible gives examples about the narrow way (see Matthew 7:13–14). The true Church of God loses members for a variety of reasons and the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 tells us why. In this parable, some seed fell by the wayside showing that Satan can snatch away what was sown, some fell on stony places showing no root because there was not much earth to allow seed to grow and flourish, some fell among thorns where the riches of this world choked the word and only, as we read in verse 23, was there success: "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

We may also recall the story in Matthew 19:16–22, where the young ruler turned down great advice

from Jesus because he was rich and the Way of Life he would be called to wasn't as attractive as the riches of this world which he already had.

We tend to think that this is just a Church of God problem but one report I saw about this same problem in the USA referred to Jake Meador in the *Atlantic* who wrote in 2023 that "Nearly everyone I grew up with in my childhood church in Lincoln, Nebraska, is no longer Christian. That's not unusual. Forty million Americans have stopped attending church in the past 25 years. That's something like 12 percent of the population, and it represents the largest concentrated change in church attendance in American history."

The same process could be applied, no doubt to the UK, Canada, Australia, Germany and many other nations around the world.

However, there is one big difference when comparing the true Church of God and other religious organizations. It really matters in the Church that Jesus founded and is now the Head of, as it is a question of our eternal future, while other churches and organizations with their pagan roots and theology have adherents who have not been called to God's Way of Life at this time. Their time will come but for us, we are having our one and only opportunity for salvation now. We read in 1 Peter 4:17: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

Why did some come into the Church and leave it? There will be many reasons. Some may never have been converted at all in the first place and their time will come at some time in the future. In 2 Peter 3:9, we read: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." God doesn't want anyone to fail but there will be some who will feel that the Way of Life to which we are called, for whatever reasons, is not for them.

With the "Signs of the Times and the End of the Age," as highlighted in Matthew 24:3-31, not that far away now, we cannot afford to slack off in our efforts to grow and overcome so that we will be in the Family of God at Christ's Return and we will, having been sold on the true Way of Life, be able to help and assist others to achieve the same goal.

Let us keep our eyes on the prize and ensure that we attain the same outcome as the apostle Paul who wrote in 2 Timothy 4:8: "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

We will achieve that by continuing to be "sold on the Way of Life" that we have been called to.

With Christian love,



Brian Gale (United Kingdom)