

Reign of Error:

*An Illustration of the Abuse of Power in the
Philadelphia Church of God*

September 2007

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32, KJV

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.

Sir Winston Churchill

“When our own thoughts are forbidden, when our questions are not allowed and our doubts are punished, when contacts and friendships outside the organization are censored, we are being abused for an end that never justifies the means.

...When we consider staying in a group because we cannot bear the loss, disappointment, and sorrow our leaving will cause for ourselves and those we have come to love, we are in a cult.

If there is any lesson to be learned, it is that an ideal can never be brought about by fear, abuse and the threat of retribution. When family and friends are used as a weapon in order to force us to stay in an organization, something has gone terribly wrong.”

Deborah Layton
Jonestown Survivor
Seductive Poison

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PROLOGUE

In December, 2005, Gerald Flurry, Pastor General of the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG), issued a surprising edict to all PCG members (see appendix) - they must immediately cut off relationships with all friends and family members who are or were members of the PCG's parent church, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), but who have not become members of the PCG. (The WCG was founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong.) Gerald Flurry labels these people "Laodicean" based on his interpretation of Revelation 3:14-21.

The following is a series of three letters written to the PCG ministry. They focus specifically on how Gerald Flurry's edict contradicts the 5th commandment. These letters were written confidentially to the PCG following their required process of first taking an issue to the local minister. If he is unable to resolve it, to then take it to the Regional Director. If he is unable to resolve the issue, only then should it be taken to the Pastor General, Gerald Flurry (who publicly stated that his door is always open).

My original study, dated December 2006, was submitted to the local minister, Fred Dattolo. In formulating a response, he sought the assistance of the Regional Director, Wayne Turgeon. Wayne Turgeon, in turn, sought the assistance of a number of other unidentified ministers and/or students to assist in the PCG's official response. Their response was finally presented to me at the end of May, 2007. The reasoning presented in their official response was unsound and unscriptural. As the Regional Director was unable to provide an adequate answer to my question, in July 2007, I wrote directly to Gerald Flurry pointing out the problems in the reasoning and asking for clarification. I was told by Wayne Turgeon that I had "jumped the order" and that he would redirect my letter back down to Fred Dattolo and if he could not address it, only then would Wayne Turgeon forward it to Gerald Flurry. I reminded him that this was the same question I originally asked in December 2006, which both he and the local minister were unable to adequately answer. Within a week of submitting this letter requesting clarification, I was publicly suspended. (Suspension is supposed to be a private matter to allow an individual to sort through a personal problem without his or her reputation being tarnished.) Shortly after my public suspension, I was told by Fred Dattolo that he was too busy to respond to my letter and that as a result, I would not be permitted to attend the Feast of Tabernacles (an annual festival which all Church of God members attend in accordance with Leviticus 23:34).

This documented exchange provides a unique window on common practices within this closed organization. It is illustrative of how power is arrogantly wielded over the PCG membership. Please read this exchange and judge for yourself the level of integrity, the degree of openness and the soundness of mind in the PCG ministry.

During the nine-month long process of trying to get an answer from the PCG ministry to a very simple question, I kept my question in the strictest confidence. I told no member in the PCG of these letters or the issue I had with Gerald Flurry's ruling. On August 11th, 2007, I was publicly suspended for the question I raised. I interpret this public action as the PCG's willingness to allow our conversation to continue in the public arena.

Sincerely,

Adrian D.

Former member of the Philadelphia Church of God
adriand070707@gmail.com

My Study on the Ruling to Cut Off Laodicean Parents

December 2006

Introduction

The following is a personal study on the ruling to cut off Laodicean parents. When we look back on the WCG crisis, God's people are often blamed for not speaking up when they saw changes they didn't understand. They are accused of lacking spiritual courage. The culture in the church, however, was not conducive to brethren asking questions. It is easy to label those that speak up as having a poor attitude or being intellectually rebellious. It is my hope that this study will be accepted as an honest search for answers. This study shows me that the ruling to cut off Laodicean parents might countermand God's clear commandment to honour one's parents. If my analysis is incorrect, I look forward to being shown where it is wrong from the scriptures.

Foundation for Ruling

The scriptural foundation for the ruling to cut off Laodicean parents is found in Matt 10:35-37.

Mat 10:35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Mat 10:36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

Mat 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

This ruling teaches us that Christ wants us to actively sever ties with Laodicean parents.

Human vs. Divine Reasoning

Human reasoning is a process of coming to conclusions based solely upon information that comes to us through the five senses. Divine reasoning uses a sound understanding of scripture as its foundation. God expects us to be logical because He is logical and His creation is logical.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

It is impossible for God to be illogical. Logic is a necessary attribute of God because illogic is confusion.

1Co 14:33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

The ruling to cut off Laodicean parents, therefore, must be proven logically from the scriptures.

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Jigsaw Puzzle

Mr. Armstrong (HWA) taught us that doctrines should not be established on one scripture. In the preface to *Mystery of the Ages*, HWA wrote the following regarding understanding the Bible:

“It is a mystery because it is a coded book. It is like a jigsaw puzzle, with perhaps thousands of various pieces of different forms and shapes that can be fitted together in only one precise pattern.”

Using this as a guide, we know that God’s word does not contradict itself. If our understanding leads to scriptural contradiction, our understanding is incomplete. With what HWA stated in the preface of *Mystery of the Ages* in mind, how do we reconcile Matthew 10:35-37 with *each* of the following scriptures?

Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exo 21:17 And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

Lev 19:3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father; and ye shall keep my sabbaths: I am Jehovah your God.

Deu 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Deu 27:16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Pro 15:20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Mat 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Mat 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Mat 15:5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

Mat 15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Mat 15:7 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

Mat 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

Mat 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

Mat 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Mat 19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Mat 19:19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mar 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Mar 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God.

Mar 10:19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Clearly, a fundamental key to eternal life is honouring one's parents. The physical family is a metaphor for the spiritual family. Parents hold a special office within the family which must be honoured. This office must grow in honour over time just as God's family government, and the honour of each office within that government, continually increases through eternity. Does Jesus Christ ultimately take on the honourable office of a parent?

Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, *The everlasting Father*, The Prince of Peace.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Does God take it for granted that children honour their parents? Does He use this as a basis for reasoning with man?

Mal 1:6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Does God use physical relationships as a measure for how well we will function in a spiritual relationship with Him?

1Jo 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

The Law

I have heard Matthew 10:35-37 explained by saying that while the Ten Commandments require us to honour our parents, they do not require us to “love” our parents. This is exactly what Mr. Tkach taught. In response to this teaching, Mr. Flurry, in the May 2001 Trumpet, under the section, Stumbling at the Law, wrote:

Some time ago I read one of the most unbiblical statements about God’s law ever made by a religious leader in God’s Church. Joseph Tkach, Sr., now deceased, was pastor general of the Worldwide Church of God. He wrote in his member and co-worker letter of May 27, 1992, “*The Ten Commandments* are important, but they are not enough....

Mr. Tkach said this in that same co-worker letter: “These moral problems, along with the more ‘invisible’ moral problems of neglect and oppression of the weak and the poor, and corruption in business, politics and religion, would indeed be improved if people began keeping the Ten Commandments. However, it is a common mistake to assume, ‘If everybody would just keep the Ten Commandments, what a nice world we would have.’ **Christians should consider that the Ten Commandments do not require kindness, mercy, compassion, generosity, sacrifice for others, impartiality, patience or love.** Nor do the Ten Commandments specifically forbid conceit, envy, hatred, rage or selfish ambition.”...

Mr. Tkach also said the Ten Commandments “do not require sacrifice...or love.” But notice 1 John 5:3: “For this *is* the LOVE OF GOD, *that we keep his commandments*: and his commandments are not grievous.” **God says keeping the law *is* love! In other words, if you don’t keep the Ten Commandments, you don’t have real love.**

Mr. Tkach created his own phony “love” outside of God’s law.

This is a very serious subject as it deals with how we teach God’s law. Further on in this article, Mr. Flurry states:

The subject is those who lose their eternal lives because of how they deal with the words of God’s Bible. If you *add* to God’s words, you receive the plagues that are written in the Bible.

But that’s not all. If you take away some of the words of the Bible, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ETERNAL LIFE! What could be more serious?

God’s commandments are just that – commandments. Should we be extremely careful about how we teach others to observe these commandments?

Mat 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Mat 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and **shall teach men so**, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach **them**, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The key question we must ask is does Matthew 10:35-37 contradict the Ten Commandments? Are we forced to reason around the Ten Commandments in order to follow Christ’s words in Matthew 10:35-37?

The law is love and consequently, observing the law works no ill to one's neighbours.

Mat 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Mat 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Mat 22:39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mat 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Rom 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Rom 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Some have tried to reason that the 1st commandment "trumps" the 5th. This is not what the scripture says. All of God's commandments work together and represent His way of love:

Jam 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Studying in Context

One of the rules of Bible study that HWA taught us is to study scriptures in context. One cannot understand Matthew 10:35-37 without studying it in context. When we study the context of Matthew 10:35-37, we discover that Jesus Christ was giving his disciples specific instructions to proclaim the gospel, and second, that there is an underlying metaphor to all the instructions in the chapter.

Matthew 10:1-12 shows us that Christ instructed His disciples not to go to the Gentiles but rather to the house of Israel.

In Matthew 10:13-15, Christ explains the two reactions Israel will have to what the disciples teach. They will either accept what is taught or reject it.

In verse 16, Christ then introduces the underlying metaphor to all of His instructions. What is the underlying metaphor?

Mat 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

The rest of the chapter is governed by this metaphor. The disciples are sheep and they are to behave as sheep. They are to rely completely on their Shepherd for protection. There must be nothing sharp, harmful or offensive about them. The metaphor is extended to say that while they are to be as wise as serpents, they are to be as harmless as doves. Absolutely no harm should come from them, though, for His sake, much harm would come to them. Understanding this controlling metaphor unlocks the meaning of the rest of the passage and enables it to fit, like the jigsaw puzzle HWA spoke of, precisely with the rest of the Bible.

Each verse, from Matthew 10:16 on, can be analyzed to see who is actively causing harm and who is passive and on the receiving end of the harm. God's sheep are active only when it comes to preaching God's truth. When it comes to harmful action, they are passive and always on the receiving end.

Scripture	Action	Active	Passive
10:17	for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:18	brought before governors and kings for my sake	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:21	the brother shall deliver up the brother to death	Brother (wolf)	Brother (sheep)
10:21	and the father the child (deliver to death)	Father (wolf)	Child (sheep)
10:21	the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death	Children (wolves)	Parents (sheep)
10:22	hated of all men for my name's sake	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:23	when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:25	how much more shall they call them of his household?	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:26	Fear them not therefore	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:28	fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul	Men (wolves)	Disciples (sheep)
10:35	set a man at variance against his father	Man (wolf)	Father (sheep)
10:35	the daughter against her mother	Daughter (wolf)	Mother (sheep)
10:35	the daughter in law against her mother in law	Daughter-in-law (wolf)	Mother-in-law (sheep)
10:36	And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.	Foes (wolves)	Man (sheep)

Does living God's way of life infuriate the ungodly and bring persecution?

2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

1Pe 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

Clearly, the source of the variance in Matthew 10:35-37 is the ungodly.

Mat 10:36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

Mat 10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

As a result of obeying Christ and following Him, a Christian's relatives, agitated by Satan, are set at variance against the Christian and begin to persecute him. The meaning of Matt 10:35 is Christ came to set an ungodly man at variance against the godly. That's why He fore-warned the disciples that He is sending them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. A man will find himself in a household full of wolves when he lives God's way. Hence, Christ warns them:

Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Mat 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Source of Variance

Matthew 10:35-37 makes it clear that following Christ is not an easy path. The true Christian must be prepared to give up even the closest family relations. The contextual analysis of Matthew 10:35-37, makes it clear who the source of the variance is.

The word translated "variance" in Matthew 10:35 is dichazo - 1369 in Strong's.

G1369 dichazo

Thayer Definition: to cut into two parts, cleave asunder, sever

Part of Speech: verb

It is an active verb and as noted earlier, throughout Matthew 10, those that are actively destroying are not of God.

The word dichostasia (1370 in Strong's) is a derivative of dichazo (1369) with the same root. It is translated as seditions in Gal 5:20 and categorized as a work of the flesh. This word is used in three places in the Bible and it is never associated with God's true followers. This is consistent with Matthew 10:35 identifying the wolves as the source of variance.

Gal 5:19 Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, **seditions (1370)**, heresies,

Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause **divisions (1370)** and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and **strife (1370)**, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

The reconciliation of Matthew 10:35-37 with the rest of the Bible becomes clear in Gal 5:22-23:

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Gal 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. The Christian, led by God's Spirit, is in no danger of contradicting God's law. The Christian honours his parents as God commands. It is the proclamation of his faith that causes his parents to sever their relationships with him. When this happens, the true Christian must decide to remain faithful and not deny Christ:

Mat 10:31 Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Mat 10:32 Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

Mat 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

The inability to show his parents honour is not the fault or error of the Christian. The Christian has not departed from the path of truth and cannot be held accountable for his parents' actions.

Rom 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

False Dichotomy?

dicho- or dich-¹

pref.

In two; into two parts

We get our word “dichotomy” from the same Greek root as dichazo.

di·chot·o·my²

–*noun, plural -mies.*

1. division into two parts, kinds, etc.; subdivision into halves or pairs.
2. division into two mutually exclusive, opposed, or contradictory groups: *a dichotomy between thought and action.*

Dichotomy³

A **dichotomy** is any splitting of a whole into exactly two non-overlapping parts.

In other words, it is a mutually exclusive bipartition of elements. i.e. nothing can belong simultaneously to both parts, and everything must belong to one part or the other. They are often contrasting and spoken of as "opposites." The term comes from dichotomos (divided): dich- ([in] two) temnein (to cut).

A **false dichotomy** is a logical fallacy consisting of a supposed dichotomy which fails one or both of the conditions: it is not jointly exhaustive or not mutually exclusive. In its most common form, two entities are presented as if they are exhaustive, when in fact other alternatives are possible. In some cases, they may be presented as if they are mutually exclusive although there is a broad middle ground (see also undistributed middle).

The ruling to cut off Laodicean family becomes a false dichotomy by allowing members married to Laodicean spouses to remain with them. Members must not have their parents visit them because “that would be like having Satan in your living room.” Following this logic, does it make sense for PCG members married to Laodiceans to then allow Satan in their bedroom? This is illogical and God is not the author of confusion. Moreover, children growing up in such a union are taught to honour their parents. For example, if the mother is in the PCG and the father is in the WCG, what happens as the child matures and is baptized but still lives at home? Will the child suddenly be compelled to cut off his father while living under his roof?

Honouring Parents

The true Christian is as harmless as a dove because he follows God’s law of love. Severing family relations is an act of psychic violence and real damage. It has caused intense suffering among many of God’s people. In fact, in many cases, the damage is irreparable and its ramifications are far reaching. The destruction of the family is one of Satan’s greatest victories. Protecting family is at the heart of God’s way.

Mal 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

¹ *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.0.1)*

Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006.

² *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.0.1)*

Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006.

³ *From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

Does the Bible teach children to obey their parents in the Lord?

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

From this scripture we can see that children are not obligated to obey their parents if their parents are instructing them to disobey God. Does the Bible teach us to also honour our parents “in the Lord” or does it instruct us to honour them period?

Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Honour is due to them because of their office. David did not lift his hand against Saul, because of Saul’s God-given office. Even though David knew God had left Saul and he could have made a good case for cutting off Saul, he respected the office and taught others to do the same. David was a man after God’s own heart.

The word “honour” is 3513 in Strong’s and it is defined as follows:

H3513 *kaw-bad*

A primitive root; to *be heavy*, that is, in a bad sense (*burdensome, severe, dull*) or in a good sense (*numerous, rich, honorable*); causatively to *make weighty* (in the same two senses): - abounding with, more grievously afflict, boast, be chargeable, X be dim, glorify, be (make) glorious (things), glory, (very) great, be grievous, harden, be (make) heavy, be heavier, lay heavily, (bring to, come to, do, get, be had in) honour (self), (be) honourable (man), lade, X more be laid, make self many, nobles, prevail, promote (to honour), be rich, be (go) sore, stop.

Another explanation given for the ruling is that “kawbad” (honour) can be used in a good sense or a bad sense. Clearly, one must determine the sense from the context. God uses the same word in 1 Sam 2:30. From the context, it should be crystal clear that “kawbad” (honour) is meant in the good sense.

1Sa 2:30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

The context of Exod 20:12 (the 5th commandment) makes it clear that kawbad is meant in the positive sense. It would be illogical and inconsistent for God to command us to despise our parents and be blessed for it.

Having the ability to honour one’s parents and failing to do so is a form of robbery as one fails to provide to one’s parents what is rightfully theirs. We cannot use human reasoning to say this is acceptable to God:

Pro 28:24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, *It is* no transgression; the same *is* the companion of a destroyer.

Rom 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Pro 20:20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

It has been a year since this ruling has been followed and it has caused former and current WCG members to become extremely bitter against the PCG.

Pro 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath; But a grievous word stirreth up anger.

The rationale behind this is to save people from the tribulation. Stirring up bitterness and destroying family relationships increases the likelihood that they will never want to hear anything from Mr. Flurry. What about those elderly parents on their death bed? Clearly, they will not be going into the tribulation. How does cutting them off save them from the tribulation?

Gen 42:38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, **then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.**

Pro 30:11 *There is* a generation *that* curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

Is there an example in the Bible of brethren blindly following a decision to cut off other brethren? If so, was it the right thing to do?

Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he *withdrew and separated* himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Gal 2:13 And the **other Jews dissembled likewise with him**; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that *they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel*, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Coercion

Main Entry: **co-er-cion**

Pronunciation: kO-'&r-zh&n, -sh&n

Function: *noun*

: the use of express or implied threats of violence or reprisal (as discharge from employment) or other intimidating behavior that puts a person in immediate fear of the consequences in order to compel that person to act against his or her will;

A fundamental premise of God's plan is that men must choose to follow Him of their own free will. There must be no coercion. God has given man free will so that he will voluntarily choose His way of life. Putting people in a position where they have to come into the PCG in order to talk to their loved ones is a form of coercion. God does not want us to bring others to Him through coercion but rather through example.

1Pe 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

This ruling is also problematic because the WCG attracted many people through its doors. We cannot be absolutely certain that everyone that was baptized was converted. Concluding that they were converted and condemning them to the tribulation is doing exactly the opposite of what we are instructed to do in Matt 7.

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Mat 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Abraham Obeyed God's Voice

Another scripture that is used to justify the decision to cut off parents is the passage showing Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac followed by God's endorsement of Abraham.

Gen 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Gen 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

The logic here is that since Abraham obeyed God's voice in the face of potentially breaking His law, we should be willing to do the same. First, it must be noted that Abraham did not actually follow through and kill his son. He was stopped before he could complete the action. Second, it must be noted that God used Abraham as a metaphor of the sacrifice He would make with His Son. Finally, and most importantly, Abraham spoke directly with God. When God speaks through men, He does not expect us to follow blindly. He expects us to evaluate what is said against His law. His law must be paramount.

Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

The following passage in 1 Kings 13 shows the danger of following what a man says when it contradicts what God says.

1Ki 13:14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I *am*.

1Ki 13:15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

1Ki 13:16 And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

1Ki 13:17 For it was said to me **by the word of the LORD**, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

1Ki 13:18 He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him.

1Ki 13:19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

1Ki 13:20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

1Ki 13:21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, **Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,**

1Ki 13:22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

1Ki 13:23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

1Ki 13:24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

Conclusion

God makes it clear that we must not function outside of the way of truth; we must not stumble at the law nor cause others to stumble at the law; we must remain steadfast in the simplicity of Christ; and we must not use complex reasoning to reason around His law.

Rom 2:23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

Gal 2:17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

3Jo 1:11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

Mal 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

Jam 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

Jam 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

Jam 3:16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

Jam 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Jam 3:18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Mat 5:9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Rom 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

In conclusion, the scriptures interpret themselves.

2Pe 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

HWA taught us to look at **all** of the scriptures on a subject before concluding what any one specific scripture means. Again, referring to understanding the Bible, HWA said:

“It is a mystery because it is a coded book. It is like a jigsaw puzzle, with perhaps thousands of various pieces of different forms and shapes that can be fitted together in only one precise pattern.”

Taking Matthew 10:35-37 out of context, it is easy to interpret it to mean we must actively sever ties with Laodicean parents. Reading it in context, however, and linking it with every other scripture in the Bible on child-parent relationships, one precise pattern suggests itself: God’s people must do all they can to live peaceably with others and to honour their parents. Like God, we must bless and love those who oppose us. In so doing, we strive for God’s perfection and develop His character:

Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Mat 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Mat 5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans so?

Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore **perfect**, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

How do we develop perfect love like our Father in heaven?

1Jo 4:17 **Herein is our love made perfect**, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

1Jo 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

1Jo 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

1Jo 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1Jo 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Gal 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Gal 5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

From what this study of the scriptures has shown me, we are not walking “uprightly according to the truth of the gospel” when we actively cut off parental relationships.

Pro 19:26 He that wasteth *his* father, *and* chaseth away *his* mother, *is* a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

Pro 19:27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from the words of knowledge.

I am open to being shown, from the scriptures, where my understanding is flawed.

07/07/07 Clarification Request to Gerald Flurry

July 7, 2007

Mr. Gerald Flurry
Pastor General
Philadelphia Church of God
PO Box 3700
Edmond, Oklahoma
USA 73083

Dear Mr. Flurry:

Re: Policy to Cut Off Laodicean Parents

I am writing directly to you as it is clear to me that in responding to my Bible study, dated December 2006, strenuous efforts were made by the multiple authors to maintain anonymity. I am aware that, even though: i) the response was on blank paper rather than Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) letterhead; ii) the response was not signed by anyone; and iii) the response never references anyone by name; no correspondence of this nature would be released without your direct knowledge, participation and approval. I shall respect the desire for anonymity throughout this letter by referring to “the authors of the letter”, “one of the authors of the letter” and/or “the local minister”.

Based upon my review of your letter and my discussion with the local minister on May 30th, 2007, I understand the Church’s official response to my question regarding your policy and the 5th commandment to be:

1. “Mr. Armstrong’s April 1980 Good News article entitled ‘When One is Disfellowshipped, Which Family Comes First’ is the bedrock of the policy not Matthew 10”.
2. “The key to the ruling is that Laodiceans have chosen to disfellowship themselves from the one true Church”;
3. “All Laodicean brethren choose not to fellowship with the PCG, consequently, they are demonstrating that
 - a. they don’t care about the truth and/or
 - b. they have a fundamental disagreement with the PCG”;
4. “If they are not supporting God’s man, they are in rebellion against God’s government”;
5. “Parents are not exempt from the decision to cut off people in rebellion against God’s government”;
6. The policy, “while it may cause pain, does not cause harm” and therefore does not violate God’s direction in Matthew 10:16 to be as harmless as a dove;
7. “The goal of the policy is not to coerce people into the PCG but to protect God’s sheep from Laodiceans”;
8. “Mr. Flurry has more of the Spirit than anyone else and thousands of people are praying for him. Therefore, we should have the faith to trust God’s government to do what is right”;
9. “Logic is subject to interpretation and so cannot be relied upon.”
10. I should “see the possibility that this might be right and just obey it”

It is my hope that this letter and my previous study are seen for what they are: a sincere effort to get to the truth of this matter.

I therefore request your permission to speak frankly. No disrespect is intended. When Nathanael spoke his mind to Philip regarding Christ, Christ commended him for the absence of hypocrisy.

Joh 1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Joh 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

The Meeting

First, I would like to commend the local minister. He met with my wife and me in person and patiently read through your letter. He tried his best to make the reasoning clear, but that was a difficult task as the letter had multiple authors and was, consequently, disjointed. I was surprised that I was not permitted to take a copy of your letter with me. This was followed by another surprise: his request, per your instruction, that I do not take “verbatim notes” on the letter. These steps, combined with the strenuous efforts of the authors to maintain anonymity, leave me bewildered.

At issue is whether or not this ruling is asking me to break God’s Law. Isn’t it reasonable that I should have the opportunity to carefully examine the reasoning behind such a request? The expectation that I am to read through your letter in one sitting, under supervision, without making “verbatim notes”, and simply comply with the ruling, is unreasonable at best and certainly unprecedented.

None of the authors seemed to grasp the specificity of my original question. The specific question in my study, dated December 2006, was: can you show me, **from the scriptures**, how the ruling to cut off Laodicean parents does not countermand God’s clear commandment to honour them? There is not a single page of my 15-page study to you that does not contain at least one scripture; most pages contain multiple scriptures. I was making the effort to search the scriptures. In your official response, one of the authors stated, “Throwing scriptures at a subject doesn’t make it right.” This author ought to be ashamed of himself. We do not “throw” scriptures at a subject. Mr. Armstrong taught us that in order to understand God’s meaning behind any particular scripture, we must search the Bible and gather all the scriptures on the subject and ensure they all tie together, without contradiction, before concluding what any one scripture means. Have we departed from this practise? Perhaps this author was simply expressing his frustration at his inability to find scriptures to support his reasoning. In your 12-page response, only a handful of scriptures were referenced. The response went on for pages and pages without any reference to the Bible. Isn’t this dangerous ground when dealing with the possibility of countermanding God’s Law?

Foundation of the Policy

1. “Mr. Armstrong’s April 1980 Good News article entitled ‘When One is Disfellowshipped, Which Family Comes First’ is the bedrock of the policy not Matthew 10”.

In my December 2006 study, I referred to Matthew 10:35 as the “*scriptural* foundation of the ruling.” Specifically, what I meant was that as the ruling relates to children cutting off their Laodicean parents, this is the only scripture that seems to directly support your position. I then went on to show that this scripture does not, in fact, support the ruling. One of the authors of your letter stated, without any scriptural support, that my analysis of Matthew 10 was simply human reasoning. Does just stating something is human reasoning make it so? He then went on to use Lange’s commentary (a human being’s ideas on the Bible) to support his argument while referencing no scriptures. He concluded by reasoning:

6. The policy, “while it may cause pain, does not cause harm” and therefore does not violate God’s direction in Matthew 10:16 to be as harmless as a dove;

This is not simple, direct, Christ-like language. I would fear to have to stand before God and try to argue that I caused pain but I didn’t cause harm.

I was given a copy of Mr. Armstrong’s April 1980 Good News article, “When One is Disfellowshipped, Which Family Comes First” and told that this article was the “bedrock” of the policy. First, I was surprised that the Bible was not used as the foundation of such a controversial policy. Mr. Armstrong himself repeatedly said, “Don’t believe me, believe the Bible.”

Second, this article is taken out of context. Mr. Armstrong was very clear and specific about to whom this article applied. He stated in the article, “But what of a member of your human family who had come into the Church and is *excommunicated for causing discord and division or other spiritual offense in the Church?*”

There is no need to try to force fit all Laodicean brethren into this category by reasoning loosely that they have all disfellowshipped themselves. Mr. Armstrong makes it clear how we should deal with those who are not excommunicated by the Church, but who choose to drop out, in the May 4th, 1981 Worldwide News article, entitled ‘Can We Fellowship the Disfellowshipped?’:

“Those who had become baptized and received as members, but who, for offenses, had been disfellowshipped, we are to ‘AVOID THEM’ ...But what about those former members who just of their own accord, dropped out? I think we have to go to Jesus’ parable about the sower and the seed. Jesus showed that a few – *or it may be many* – endure only for a little while. It is those who ENDURE TO THE END who shall be saved and born into God’s kingdom. Perhaps those who lost interest and dropped out were never converted in the first place. God shows us no reason to avoid them, but we should not closely fellowship unless and until they are being led by God’s Holy Spirit and show the fruits of God’s spirit within them”.

This later writing from Mr. Armstrong (published over a year after the article you use as your bedrock) does not reconcile with one of the author’s statements that:

2. “The key to the ruling is that Laodiceans have chosen to disfellowship themselves from the one true Church”;

Mr. Armstrong's writings do not support your "key to the ruling". He did not refer to those members who "just of their own accord, dropped out" as having "disfellowshipped themselves". He just accepted the fact that this calling is not for everyone. In fact, he makes a clear allowance for the fact that it may be MANY who do not endure to the end but that God shows us no reason to avoid them. This was his judgment even though there was one clear physical organization and it was clear that anyone in the Church at that time was under his purview. We did not have the confused splintering of God's Church that we have today where most do not recognize you as having any authority over them whatsoever. Mr. Armstrong states clearly that the Most High God shows us no reason to avoid them even though we should not closely fellowship with them. Contradicting the more recent 1981 article requires an explanation if the 1980 article is the bedrock for the ruling.

The following statement makes no allowance for brethren being deceived:

3. "All Laodicean brethren choose not to fellowship with the PCG, consequently, they are demonstrating that
 - a) they don't care about the truth and/or
 - b) they have a fundamental disagreement with the PCG";

Mr. Armstrong demonstrated compassion for those who did not endure. How much more compassion should we have for brethren who have been cleverly deceived? Mr. Armstrong repeatedly said, "A deceived person doesn't know that he is deceived." In your ruling, no differentiation has been made between how we treat the synagogue of Satan (those who actively set out to destroy God's work) and deceived Laodiceans (their victims).

Your position also assumes that the Laodiceans are *deliberately* choosing not to submit themselves to God's government.

4. "If they are not supporting God's man, they are in rebellion against God's government";

Perception drives behaviour. Whoever controls a person's perception also controls their behaviour. Behaviour is like hardware and perception is like software. Once the software is programmed, the hardware simply follows the instruction set. Is it possible that there are Laodicean brethren who are having their perceptions programmed on a weekly basis by wolves? Is it possible that week after week they are being told that you are a false minister and through the force of repetition, they have come to believe this? Is it then possible that your ruling for PCG members to cut off their family members serves as evidence to confirm what they are being told about you?

Human perception is fluid and easily influenced. Terrorists who blow themselves up while murdering hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of people do so because someone has tampered with their perception. Most, if not all, truly believe they are doing God's work. In fact, the history of mankind is littered with examples of man treating fellow man inhumanely and believing it is God's will.

The power to influence perception and control behaviour is so potent, it can even negate a mother's natural protective instinct for her children. Mothers who gave their babies Kool-Aid laced with cyanide in Jonestown, Guyana truly believed they were doing God's will. Influencing perception is one of the greatest powers in the world. It is most powerful when it preys upon the fear of eternal damnation. Those who claim to speak for God, therefore, have extraordinary power over their converts.

Can we categorically state that “*all* Laodicean brethren *choose* not to fellowship with the PCG?” Have we personally examined the motives of every member of the church of God that is not in the PCG? Is it possible that there are some who are well-intentioned but programmed by false ministers who claim to speak for God?

Faith, Logic & Human Reasoning

In our meeting to review your letter, the local minister stated, “What is logical to me may not be logical to you. Logic is subject to interpretation and so cannot be relied upon.” This is a very disappointing statement. God expects us to prove all things. (1 Thes 5:21)

He then followed this statement by saying:

8. “Mr. Flurry has more of the Spirit than anyone else and thousands of people are praying for him. Therefore, we should have the faith to trust God’s government to do what is right”;
10. “You should see the possibility that this might be right and just obey it”

When I enquired about the definition of faith, it was defined as trusting God to lead His man. Mr. Armstrong defined faith as believing God will do what He says *in His word*. When the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) was on track, faith was never defined as just “believing God’s man”. Again, Mr. Armstrong repeatedly said, “Don’t believe me, believe the Bible.” By telling me to “just obey”, the implication is that I forego God’s instruction to prove all things and “just trust God’s government”. The local minister could just as well have said, “Don’t believe the Bible, believe Mr. Flurry.”

Logic was created by God in that it is an attribute of God and it exists in everything He creates and does. God is a logical Being and He expects us to be logical.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Human reasoning, without God’s Spirit and without a sound understanding of His word, leads to disaster. However, God expects us to be logical. The problem with logic is that it is not used properly and it is usually hijacked by emotion. That is, as human beings, we tend to make up our minds based on emotion and then use logic to justify our position. It is difficult for us to examine something objectively, and then make up our minds only after all the facts have been examined. Mr. Armstrong was exemplary in doing this, however, he was the exception rather than the rule. Many of the doctrines he eventually came to understand were diametrically opposite to what he *wanted* to believe. He was able to set aside his emotions and examine issues objectively. Through God’s Spirit, we must do the same. We must have the discipline to set aside the influence of our emotions and examine issues objectively.

Fruit of the Policy

I am not aware of any good fruit resulting from this policy. I have only observed bitterness, rancour and strife. Frequently, I hear firsthand how brethren have ruined *all* family relations in order to avoid being questioned by their family about the parent, child or sibling they have cut off. In December 2005, we were told that we should comply with this policy because it would lead the Laodiceans to repentance. Nineteen months later (sufficient time to assess the fruit), it has only ruptured families; it has only infuriated the very people we are supposed to help; and it has only increased their resolve to have nothing to do with you. Despite the lack of good fruit, I am not aware of any ministers questioning this policy.

This brings me to what I believe to be the truly harmful fruit of your policy. Your ruling makes it virtually impossible for the ministry to disagree with you on any substantive issue. For example, even if one of the authors of your letter believed that your ruling is not from God, he could never state it. The consequences would be devastating. He would risk being disfellowshipped. Once disfellowshipped, not only would he be cut off from his spiritual family, he would also be cut off from his wife and children, and any other members of his physical family in the PCG. If he has a long history in the Church, he would have already cut off members of his physical family who are not in the PCG. Moreover, he would have great difficulty finding gainful employment in a market that does not cater to the middle-aged. In an instant, his life would be shattered. Subconsciously, the fear of this outcome exists whether he has processed it consciously or not. One can understand how the emotion of fear would sabotage his thinking and force him to use human reasoning to justify a pre-conceived notion rather than face the potentially unpleasant task of objectively looking at the facts. I believe it is this underlying fear that leads to statements like:

9. "What is logical to me may not be logical to you. Logic is subject to interpretation and so cannot be relied upon."

Since the ruling, every minister in the PCG is now operating under this looming dark cloud. The fact that no minister will state the obvious flaws in the reasoning behind this policy is no surprise. We witnessed the same behaviour in the WCG when the ministry was forced to comply with policies that they couldn't prove from the scriptures.

One of the authors of your letter said that I was studying the Bible to try to prove a pre-conceived notion. On the contrary, the "notion" presented to you was conceived *after* much prayer and study. It represented the conclusion of my objective searching of the scriptures to see "whether those things were so". I was presenting it to you hoping to be shown, *from the scriptures*, how my study was flawed.

Goal of the Policy

7. "The goal of the policy is not to coerce people into the PCG but to protect God's sheep from Laodiceans";

The Bible states:

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer to every man** that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:
Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, **that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.**

God doesn't want robots and He doesn't want people who don't know why they believe what they believe. If we have the truth, but can be so easily swayed by people who don't have the truth, why would God entrust it to us? Again, Mr. Armstrong said in his 1981 article, God shows us no reason why we should avoid people who have left the truth. They are the ones who have lost the truth, not us. They should be the ones who are afraid of being influenced by us as we are always ready to give an answer to *every man*.

Conclusion

5. "Parents are not exempt from the decision to cut off people in rebellion against God's government"

The premise that by not coming into the PCG, all Laodiceans "have disfellowshipped themselves and are therefore in rebellion against God's government" is not supported by the scriptures or by Mr. Armstrong's writings. Layering the edict to break the 5th commandment and cut off parental relationships on top of this unsupported premise is like building a house on sand instead of solid ground. Mr. Flurry, this was a difficult letter to write. I do not mean any disrespect to your office but this is a serious matter. We cannot "agree to disagree". It is impossible for both of us to be right and it is impossible for both of us to be wrong. Of course, it is likely for me, as the lay member, to be wrong. However, it is also possible for you to be wrong. If you are wrong, it means you are forcing God's people to violate His Law. So far, the reasoning used to support this ruling has not been sound or scripturally-supported. Consequently, I cannot, in good conscience, comply. As long as your reasoning is unclear and lacking proper scriptural support, I will continue to keep God's clear commandment. The apostle Paul allowed for the fact that his followers should discern how and when he followed Christ:

1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

Even the chief apostle Peter erred:

Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

These were apostles and allowance was made for them to be wrong.

I am still open to being shown, *from the scriptures with sound reasoning*, how this policy does not violate God's Law.

In Christian love and with all due respect,

Adrian D.

Email Exchange with Regional Director

From: Wayne Turgeon
Subj: document done...
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2007 4:48 pm
Size: 1K
To: Adrian

document done...
just waiting for a review from Mr. F before sending. We
"agree to disagree" with you & may need to discuss instead.

Have a great Sabbath and please give our love to your family,
Take care, Mr. T.

From: Adrian
Sent: Sunday, March 25, 2007 7:51 AM
To: Wayne Turgeon
Subject: Re: document done...

Hi Mr T,

I look forward to it!

Adrian

From: Wayne Turgeon
Sent: Tue, 27 Mar 2007 11:35
To: Adrian
Subject: RE: document done...

Me, too!

From: Adrian
Sent: Sunday, August 05, 2007 9:13 PM
To: Wayne Turgeon
Cc: Fred Dattolo
Subject: Letter to Mr. Flurry

Hi Mr. T,

I hope you and your family are well. We are enjoying extra family time up here as it is a long weekend.

Could you please forward this letter to Mr. Flurry?

Thank you.

Adrian

From: Wayne Turgeon
To: Adrian
Date: Mon, 6 Aug 2007 22:32:55 -0500
Subject: **RE: Letter to Mr. Flurry**

Hi, Adrian,

Glad you are having a great time. I had to take a few days off following camp to catch my breath.

Adrian, I am going to forward your letter to your local minister first. Then, if he feels your attitude is right, he can't answer your question/s, concerns, etc., then he will pass it on to me. Then I will forward it to Mr. Flurry. You probably don't realize that you are 'jumping the order' of the way we handled things the first time we dealt with this ☺!

By the way, I skimmed it (I'm on vacation, too!) and the reason for 'multiple authors' was to help you! Somehow your tone doesn't seem to appreciate that fact. It wasn't easy keeping your name confidential, either, believe me ☹!

Some statements are taken out of context to make myself and others look bad. You should know from your own experience that isn't playing fair.

On to Mr. Dattolo...

Wayne Turgeon

PCG Canadian RD

From: Adrian
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2007 8:34 PM
To: Wayne Turgeon
Subject: re[2]: Letter to Mr. Flurry

Hi Mr. T.,

I did not intend to make you look bad (I don't know who said what). As for taking comments out of context, I was working from my notes as I did not have the letter to refer to. Also, I didn't realize it had to start with Mr. Dattolo again because it is exactly the same question.

I hope you are enjoying your vacation and time with your family. Talk to you soon.

Adrian

From: Wayne Turgeon
To: Adrian
Date: Mon, 13 Aug 2007 16:35:05 -0500
Subject: **RE: re[2]: Letter to Mr. Flurry**

Appreciate it. Praying for you, AD, as you are a dear friend/brother just needing to be more humble/teachable. WT

Email Exchange with Local Minister

From: Fred Dattolo
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2007 3:42 PM
To: Adrian
Subject: Greetings

Hi Adrian,

How are you and Jennifer doing? Have you had any more thoughts about the Laodicean policy?

From: Adrian
Sent: Monday, September 03, 2007 11:02 AM
To: Fred Dattolo
Subject: RE: Greetings

Hi Mr Dattolo,

We are very well - with a clear conscience! How are you?

I'm afraid I don't understand the question. I submitted my thoughts on how the Laodicean policy contradicts God's word and Mr Armstrong's writings, and requested clarification on the fallacies in the reasoning you presented to me. You, Mr Turgeon and Mr Flurry all agreed to suspend me for sharing these thoughts.

Your question implies that by suspending me, you were hoping I would suddenly dismiss my pursuit of the truth on this matter. I think we all know God's word well enough to know that scriptural reason, rather than obvious coercion, is what He expects us to respond to. Can you please let me know when (or if) I am to receive an answer to the letter I submitted to Mr. Flurry? Thanks for your help.

Adrian

From: Fred Dattolo
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2007 5:36 PM
To: Adrian
Subject: RE: Greetings

Hi Adrian,

I'm disappointed. You should know that we wouldn't suspend you for "sharing these thoughts." And to label my gesture as "obvious coercion" is revealing of your attitude. How could you, "with a clear conscience," accuse me of that? I was simply hoping that you would have taken the time to dig more deeply and try to see this policy from a different perspective than the one you've been locked in to—based on God's Word, of course.

Adrian, this latest e-mail (below) and your other letters and responses to our attempts to explain this policy to you in writing and in counseling sessions reveal that you have a bias that simply won't respond to reason emanating from the Scriptures. We have already spent scores of man hours explaining this to you so I really don't see any point in responding to your latest letter.

From: Adrian
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 8:27 PM
To: Fred Dattolo
Subject: RE: Greetings
Importance: High

Hi Mr. Dattolo,

I am not clear on what is expected of me. I raised a very specific question which was not answered adequately. I pointed out where the reasoning in the answer you read to me was flawed hoping for clarification. I was then publicly suspended for doing this. If your goal was to have me see the policy from a different perspective, shouldn't you have given me a copy of the letter to study during my suspension so I can more deeply grasp what is being said and the reasoning behind it?

Also, since this is a matter of life and death importance and not a trivial matter (at issue is whether the PCG is instructing its members to break God's law), I would think the effort you put into gaining clarity on this matter is of high value. It is, in fact, your job description as it says in Malachi 2:7 (the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth).

I, too, have spent countless man hours researching this topic in order to be sure of what God expects from me. If my reasoning is flawed, I'm happy to have that pointed out. This is not about trying to prove I am right or I am wrong. This is about searching the scriptures and reasoning with a sound mind to determine the truth on this matter. Both sides must let the scriptures speak and not read into them what is not there.

After months of trying to come up with an answer to my study, Mr. Turgeon finally wrote to me on March 23rd and said, "we agree to disagree." From such a response, it is obvious to me, that your position is not as solid as you believe it is. If this was a matter of an administrative judgement, I would not make an issue of it. This is, however, a matter of God's law and, therefore, eternal life. I am unwilling to stand before God and say, "What the ministers were saying didn't make sense to me but I thought I had better do whatever they say."

In 22 years in God's Church, I have always been a member in good standing. Consequently, I am unfamiliar with the suspension process. First, I have only seen suspensions handled privately. It is only when a member comes back after being away for a while that one might learn that he or she was actually suspended. My suspension was public. I am not sure why that would be the case. Also, I am wondering what the ticket is for re-admission to services. Your email below implies that I need to think as I'm told in order to come back.

In conclusion, I am not "locked into my perspective". I have taken my years in the church to build a foundation of faith that cannot be easily moved. As a minister, wouldn't such a member be ideal as opposed to members who are easily blown about by every wind of doctrine? I have said repeatedly that I am open to being shown, *from the scriptures*, how this policy does not countermand the 5th commandment. I really mean this! The letter you read to me had obvious flaws in its reasoning. This does not automatically mean Mr. Flurry's policy is wrong. It just means the reasoning to support the policy was not sound. I am hoping you will take the time to address my questions in order to sharpen our thinking. Please share anything with me that you believe will help me to understand. In the end, this process is beneficial to everyone.

On a final note, if I have said anything offensive in any of my communications, please forgive me. This is a frustrating process for me too.

Sincerely,

Adrian

From: Fred Dattolo
Sent: Thursday, September 06, 2007 3:18 PM
To: Adrian
Subject: RE: Greetings

Hi Adrian,

I just don't have time to deal with it right now. I am extremely busy before the Feast.

From: Adrian
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 6:41 AM
To: Fred Dattolo
Subject: RE: Greetings

What does this mean for us with respect to the Feast?

From: Fred Dattolo
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 10:36 AM
To: Adrian
Subject: RE: Greetings

Hi Adrian,

This statement is not intended to be interpreted as “obvious coercion” (your words in a previous e-mail), or any other kind of coercion. It’s just a fact: Amos 3:3. You disagree on a fundamental doctrine of the PCG, with its leader and with the brethren—a doctrine that has been thoroughly vetted and substantiated from the Scriptures. See also 1 Corinthians 1:10, 13; 14:33 and Ephesians 4:4-5, particularly “one faith.”

9/11 Resignation Letter

September 11, 2007

Mr. Gerald Flurry
Pastor General
Philadelphia Church of God
PO Box 3700
Edmond, Oklahoma
USA 73083

Dear Mr. Flurry:

Re: Resignation from PCG

It has been one month since my suspension on August 11th, and it is clear to me from Mr. Fred Dattolo's September 7th email barring me and my family from attending the upcoming Holy Day services, that my suspension is of an indefinite duration. I am also aware that local ministers do not have the authority to make such decisions. Suspending me for asking a question that you and your ministers are unable and/or unwilling to answer and then preventing me and my young family from attending the upcoming Holy Day services as a result of your inability is beyond hypocritical, it is indefensible.

Human beings have great difficulty handling power. Unfortunately, you have shown that you are no exception. You apparently started out well, but as your power has grown, your integrity has deteriorated. You liken yourself to Elisha but Elisha loved God's law and upheld the fifth commandment:

1Ki 19:20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

Your likeness is not of Elisha but rather it is of Jeroboam and you are reigning the PCG with the error of Jeroboam. Like Jeroboam, who was the rightful leader of Israel after Israel split from Judah, I believe you were the rightful leader of the church after the church split.

1Ki 11:31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

Your inability and unwillingness to engage in open, scripturally-based discussion about the veracity of your policy to "cut off Laodiceans" reveals that you have an agenda other than following God's word. Although you use Herbert W. Armstrong's name, you do not follow his practice of thoroughly and objectively examining issues and coming to final conclusions based on proof and sound reasoning. Mr. Armstrong had great respect for the reasoning process. He used it to come to understand the foundational doctrines he put in place for the WCG. After presenting the reasoning process he went through to determine whether or not evolution was true to a head librarian, she stated:

“Mr. Armstrong, you have an uncanny knack for getting right to the crux of a problem. Yes, I have to admit you have chopped down the trunk of the tree. You have robbed me of PROOF! But, Mr. Armstrong, I still have to go on believing in evolution. ...I am so steeped in it, that I could not root it from my mind!”⁴

Mr. Armstrong was deeply disappointed in her response but he learned a valuable lesson which he articulates in the next chapter of his autobiography:

“How do most people come to believe what they do? ...Most people believe whatever they have been taught, or what they have read, or heard, or whatever their particular group, religion, church, political party, or area of the world believes. They simply “GO ALONG.” They carelessly ASSUME, because others do.
...Of course, too, people usually believe what they WANT to believe. That is to say, they refuse to believe what they don’t want to believe. But in my case I was forced, on thorough examination and research, to believe what, prior to that research, I had definitely and vigorously not wanted to believe. I was forced, to accept, on PROOF, that which I had started out to prove FALSE. I was forced to admit, under most humiliating circumstances, on PROOF, what I had hoped to disprove.”⁵

Like the librarian, you hold fixed opinions that will not respond to scriptural reason. Like Mr. Armstrong, I have been forced, ON PROOF, to believe that which I did not want to believe – that you do not speak for God. Through this process of trying to get a biblically-based and sound-minded answer to a very simple question, I have proven that you have an agenda other than following God’s word.

Mr. Armstrong often said how God’s church was different because it was the only church willing to admit error and to grow in grace and knowledge. How convenient for you that the only “mistakes” you admit to are interpretations of the Bible which help us discover “through revelation” that your status is continually higher than we first thought.

Although Jeroboam was the rightful leader of Israel after its split from Judah, he departed from following God in order to preserve the power he was given over God’s people. This was the error of Jeroboam. He made up his own religion and edicts in order to retain control over Israel and prevent them from speaking to their brethren in Judah:

1Ki 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

1Ki 12:27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

1Ki 12:28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

When we look at your ruling in the context of your unwillingness to acknowledge God’s word on the topic and the decisions you made immediately prior to your ruling, it becomes clear, that like Jeroboam, you have a hidden agenda of preserving your power over PCG members. Immediately before this ruling, you made the following policy changes:

⁴ Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume 1, pp. 299-300.

⁵ Ibid., p. 318

- Discontinuation of the tape library so members no longer have reference to what was said in sermons except what they have written in their notes;
- Discontinuation of tapes being sent to members who are shut in or secluded and who, due to sickness or distance, do not have access to services
- Discontinuation of sermons being transcribed for the deaf
- All members required to return all sermon tapes and CDs to the local minister who, in turn, was instructed to destroy them;
- All sermons distributed from headquarters to be played in all congregations two weeks after they are given from headquarters rather than as soon as they are received despite the fact that this leads to members not receiving “meat in due season”;
- Discontinuation of ministers counseling members on their cell phones despite their busy schedules and long drive times;

It is hard to see your policy to “cut off Laodiceans” as anything but a continuation of these self-preservation measures. This is especially true given your inability to reconcile your ruling with God’s word. You are now too entrenched with self-preservation to bother with self-examination and obedience to God’s commandments.

Jeroboam flouted God’s word and made up his own religion (e.g., changing the annual Feast of Tabernacles to the eighth month instead of the seventh as God ordained). He set up his own priests in order to control the minds and actions of the people of Israel.

1Ki 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

Like Jeroboam, you flout God’s word and create your own religion apart from God’s word. You set up priests who cater to your whims in order to control the minds and actions of God’s people. Your collective conduct during this nine-month pursuit of an answer to a very simple question, clearly illustrates the dark cloud that the ministry is now operating under, which I spoke of in my previous letter. If, like Fred Dattolo or Wayne Turgeon, I was a full-time minister, depending on you for my salary, with my children held hostage by your policy, I hope I would have the intestinal fortitude to confront you when you depart from God’s word. Of course, with human nature being what it is, most people would, as Mr. Armstrong realized, simply “go along” because others do.

I am aware that I have posed an uncomfortable question. I know how hard it would be for you to admit to everyone that you were wrong after forcing them to shatter precious relationships. The PCG would probably collapse as members would wonder how you could be so wrong and begin to question your self-proclaimed status as the prophet and sole voice of God. You are the one who is clearly locked into a “bias that won’t respond to reason emanating from the scriptures.” You have too much to lose to look at this issue objectively. Although you say your door is always open, it has become clear that your mind is closed.

I know it is discomfoting for you that I will not accept intimidation or sloppy, unscriptural reasoning from you or your ministers. Mr. Dattolo's last email barring me from attending the upcoming Holy Day services as a result of posing this question was interesting. As a deacon, I have worked closely enough with the ministry over the years to be fully aware that Mr. Dattolo has no decision making ability and that he is paid to defend your opinions. In this email, he stated that I "disagree on a fundamental doctrine of the PCG, with its leader and with the brethren—a doctrine that has been thoroughly vetted and substantiated from the Scriptures."

Clearly, he is confused. First, your policy is not a fundamental doctrine. The foundational doctrines of the PCG were established prior to your security crackdown. Second, it has not been thoroughly vetted and substantiated from the scriptures. That's the whole point of the exchange we've had and that you have struggled with for the past nine months. You have been unable to substantiate your position with God's word.

The dogmatic and confident proclamation of unsupported statements like those in Mr. Dattolo's email is a disturbing trend with your ministers. It's as if the strength and emotion with which a statement is made, makes it true. No support is given to say why or how these statements are true. For example, in a recent sermon, Mr. Brian Davis said "We are not breaking God's law as someone recently accused us of." If he was referring to me, as I suspect he was, it means he must have read my letter and was, perhaps, one of the anonymous authors of your official response. (If he read it more carefully, he would have seen that I was not accusing anyone of anything. I was simply asking a question and asking for an answer from the scriptures.) As I waited to hear him continue his rhetoric with the proof that you are not breaking God's 5th commandment, he simply went on to speak of another topic without any sense that a statement like this is unsupported and requires proof. Over and over again, your ministers make these categorical, unsupported statements as if you have the power to make things true by force of will and repetition. You and your ministers are not God, and your word, by itself, is not truth. You are not above God's law. No one is.

Of course, in his last email, Mr. Dattolo finally makes a disingenuous and feeble attempt to quote scripture in an effort to make it appear that the Bible matters. This is unimpressive. Satan quotes scripture. The difference between godly use of the scriptures and devilish use of the scriptures is the devil quotes scriptures that are convenient and ignores the rest. God teaches us to live by every word of God:

Mat 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Mat 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Mat 4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

Mat 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: **for it is written**, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Mat 4:7 Jesus said unto him, **It is written again**, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Mat 4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

Mat 4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Mat 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for **it is written**, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

In my original study to you, I quoted scores of scriptures on the topic of the 5th commandment. Again, I ask you, how do you reconcile your policy with every word of God? Mr. Dattolo says I

disagree with you and the brethren. Note that he did not say I disagree with God. As long as I am in agreement with God, it doesn't matter what men think.

Act 5:29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Mr. Dattolo also did not mention Herbert W. Armstrong in the list of people he says I disagree with. This is interesting. He seems to be subconsciously acknowledging that you are in opposition to Mr. Armstrong's last judgment on this issue as outlined in my 7/7/07 letter to you.

With respect to disagreeing with the brethren, that is a foolish statement. The brethren have been forced into this policy. You made that clear in a sermon you played in all the congregations that everyone will follow your policy "or else!". You rule the brethren through fear. They are terrified of being disfellowshipped from the PCG because you have taught them that this means they will be in the tribulation and will not go to the place of safety. Despite their fear of you, they intuitively know what you are asking them to do is unconscionable. Consequently, there are PCG members who secretly maintain contact with members in other churches.

The experiments of Stanley Milgram are highly relevant to what you are doing to PCG members. Milgram summarized the findings of his experiment in his 1974 article, "The Perils of Obedience", writing:

I set up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person simply because he was ordered to by an experimental scientist. Stark authority was pitted against the subjects' [participants'] **strongest moral imperatives against hurting others**, and, with the subjects' [participants'] ears ringing with the screams of the victims, authority won more often than not. **The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study** and the fact most urgently demanding explanation.

Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, **even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality**, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority

During Hitler's reign, many Nazis committed unspeakable atrocities out of fear of those same atrocities being done to them if they did not comply. Your ministers know all too well that what has happened to me will happen to them should they disagree with you. Unlike me, however, they know their children are held hostage by your policy and their payroll is tightly tied to their compliance. How ironic that the very things you accused Mr. Tkach of in corrupting the WCG ministry after Mr. Armstrong's death, you are now doing.

Even more disturbing is the fact that the techniques you are using to control God's people are the very same techniques Jim Jones used to control his followers. Jim Jones was completely evil. His techniques were devilish and not from God. How eerie that you are engaging in some of the very same mind control and behaviour modification techniques.

The only hope for the PCG membership is that they have enough of God's Holy Spirit to resist the temptation of human nature to mindlessly obey authority. You only have authority as long as you are obeying God. The moment you depart from God, you have no valid authority. Hopefully, enough members will ask themselves "What does God expect of me?" instead of "What does Mr. Flurry expect of me?" as you coerce them to perform unbiblical edicts.

Human nature is human nature. It can masquerade as many things. In your case, it is masquerading as the "voice of God". There is very little difference between your actions and the actions of a terrorist. Terrorists, like Osama bin Laden, do not respond to reason. They blow up buildings to force their agenda. You blow up families. God's word is an inconvenient footnote as you pursue your agenda. I pray you will repent of the direction you are heading. You are reigning the church with the error of Jeroboam.

Of course, anyone who disagrees with you on this issue will be discredited and accused of troubling the church. This is no different to Ahab's accusation of Elijah. Ahab, a descendent of Jeroboam, reigned Israel with the same error as his father – departing from the commandments of God:

1Ki 18:17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?

1Ki 18:18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

You are troubling the church by reigning with the error of Jeroboam and forcing God's people to forsake His law. You have said repeatedly that we must test our leaders. Through this nine-month process, I have tested you and found you wanting. You are long on coercion and short on scriptural reason.

In conclusion, to suspend me for asking a legitimate question, which you and your ministers struggle to answer, is beyond the pale. It reveals an underlying attitude of complete disrespect for God's word and God's people.

As a result of this nine-month process, I am deeply disappointed in you and I have lost respect for you.

Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, **brethren**, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

In accordance with Rom 16:17, it is my unfortunate duty to mark you as one which causes divisions (dichostasia) and offences contrary to the doctrine which I have learned. Please remove me from your membership list and all your subscription lists (i.e., The Philadelphia Trumpet, The Philadelphia News and the Royal Vision). I want nothing to do with the corruption that I have witnessed firsthand. I leave you with a final thought from Sir Winston Churchill:

"The truth is incontrovertible, malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is."

Sincerely,
Adrian D.

PCG Response to My Resignation Letter

From: Adrian
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2007 6:32 AM
To: Wayne Turgeon
Cc: Fred Dattolo
Subject: Resignation from PCG

Hi Mr. Turgeon,

Please forward this letter to Mr. Flurry. Thank you.

Adrian

From: "Wayne Turgeon"
To: Adrian
Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2007 10:10:47 -0500
Subject: RE: Resignation from PCG

Yes, but with great regrets ☹! Won't even comment about the swipe you took at me (or Mr. D.) except to say that you obviously don't know me very well at all. W

PS- also, it must be your guilty conscious as Mr. Davis didn't even know about u.

From: Adrian
To: Wayne Turgeon
Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2007 21:14:19 -0400
Subject: re[2]: Resignation from PCG

Sorry that you have taken this personally. Really, it has nothing to do with you (or Mr Dattolo), but rather Mr Flurry for first, trying to force me to break the 5th commandment, and second, for barring me from attending the Feast days because he couldn't answer my question from the Bible.

As far as Mr Brian Davis goes, I said, "**IF** he was referring to me", meaning he might not have been. If he wasn't referring to me, why should I have a guilty conscience? I'm strengthened to learn that there are others who are questioning this ruling in light of the 5th commandment. Ask yourself why it's so important to you and Mr Dattolo to believe I have a guilty conscience. My conscience is completely free and clear. The guilt is on your shoulders for enforcing a ruling against God's law that you don't understand and can't prove from the Bible. I honestly don't know how you, Mr Dattolo or Mr. Flurry can sleep at night for what you are doing.

I rejoice before God that this process of trying to get an answer to a very simple question has revealed the PCG's duplicity. If you thought a suspension would cause me to abandon God's law, you don't know me very well either. From what I know of you, I don't think you signed up for this deception and coercion, but you are enmeshed in it and it is very difficult for you to do anything about it now.

EPILOGUE

During this nine-month exchange with the PCG ministry, their statements seemed arbitrary, confusing and illogical. How could a church that has observance of the Ten Commandments as one of its foundational doctrines so flagrantly contradict God's law and enthusiastically coerce its members to do so? If one tries to analyze this exchange from a religious perspective, as I did initially, it will make no sense.

The actions of Gerald Flurry and his ministry become strikingly logical, however, when one views the PCG as a business with the economic objective of making Gerald Flurry and his inner circle wealthy (off the backs of the PCG members). For example, forcing members to cut off relationships with their "Laodicean" parents (breaking the 5th commandment), while allowing them to continue relationships with "Laodicean" spouses appears completely illogical; however, when one realizes that few adult children are dependent on their parents for income, one realizes that such an edict has no financial impact on the PCG. In fact, having members cut off these relationships increases the members' psychological dependence on the PCG and consequently, the PCG's financial annuity from their tithes and offerings. As most members with non-PCG spouses are women, who depend on their husbands for income, if Gerald Flurry were to force these members to cut off their "Laodicean" husbands, he would suddenly find himself with a huge influx of applications for financial assistance, increased expenses and an eroded bottom line.

The sooner PCG members and ministers realize that the shattering of their families is an economic exercise, not a religious one, the sooner they will be able to break the bonds of mind control that they have become ensnared in. In the end, only those with integrity will God enable to break free from the destructive prison of the PCG and the errant mind of Gerald Flurry.

God's Word on False Prophets

Jer 23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD.

Jer 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

Jer 23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

Conclusion

Ecc 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

Reign of Error:

Appendix



PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

December 10, 2005 • Vol. 2, No. 39

Greetings, ministers and wives!

I want to clarify the Philadelphia Church of God's policy on contact with disfellowshipped family members. This issue has not been clear among all our ministers and members. We need to become more unified on it.

Around 1985, Joseph Tkach spoke of a couple in the Church who had some family members disfellowshipped, and he told them that they were to sever their relationship with those people and not to fellowship with them. He told Mr. Armstrong about this situation publicly, and Mr. Armstrong agreed with him publicly.

Notice 1 Corinthians 5:9-11: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators [speaking spiritually] not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you NOT TO KEEP COMPANY if any man that is called a brother [speaking of somebody in the Church] be a fornicator [again, this could be referring not just to physical fornication, but spiritual sins as well] or covetous or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat."

God is saying that when fornicators, covetous, idolators, railers, drunkards, extortioners and those with spiritual problems have to be put out of the Church, the rest of us should not keep company with them or eat with them. We are not to fellowship or socialize with them. Certainly there might be an emergency in the family where you might be needed to work out the details of a will or something similar all right to deal with them on that level. But we must keep in mind what God has said.

We have had members in the PCG who have been taken out because they violated this plain command.

We are living in the fearsome time the Apostle Peter spoke of in 2 Peter 2:1-3, the time of "false prophets also among the people" and "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in *damnable heresies*," when "the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Peter warned that "through covetousness shall they with feigned words *make merchandise of you*!" This is talking about people who had been close friends and even family members! Satan is influencing minds, and he will use any means he can to reach those in the inner court.

In commanding us to avoid the Laodiceans, God is trying to protect His people from predators! Satan is subtle, and he knows how to use people to destroy you. Please review my article "God Commands That We Avoid Certain Ones—In Love!" which we reprinted in the July-August 2004 issue of *Royal Vision*.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 reads, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly*, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

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Certainly all the Laodicean groups are walking disorderly. They're not walking after the traditions given us by God's government through Mr. Armstrong. We have to look upon people that are in the Laodicean churches as being disfellowshipped. Revelation 11:1-2 says they've been *cast out*; they have been put out of the Church of God. We must not keep company or fellowship with them by going to restaurants and things like that.

In the past, some members have been told that these relationships are okay as

IMPORTANT

Mr. Flurry will be discussing a portion of this PGR personal in his sermon this week, so please do not read from it during announcements.

long as religion is not discussed. That is not what God says. Scripture makes it clear that there should be a complete cut-off.

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and *have no company with him*, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (verses 14-15).

I know it is painful to cut off contact with family. But we have to look at the positive side of this: God says that when we don't fellowship with them—if dad and mom or a close relative shuns them—that has a great sting. God wants to drive them back by making them realize they really are on the outside.

Avoiding the Laodiceans also puts a message across to them that they are influenced by the devil, and need to repent.

There are, however, a couple of exceptions to this principle.

In the case of a mate Laodicean Church or one who left the PCG, that relationship should be preserved as long as the mate is “pleased to dwell with” (1 Corinthians 7:10-14). But if that mate becomes hostile and stirs up contention, it should be cut off. Wherever there is hostility, you must cut off every tie. Sometimes that hostility can be very subtle.

There is also the case of unbaptized children (or those not validly baptized) who have left the Church. Mr. Armstrong, for example, had a relationship with his daughter—and he believed she never was converted, and the fruits were there to prove that. As long as they were unconverted, we can have a relationship there—but we do have to be awfully careful. We may have to make a judgment about someone's conversion in a few cases, but we don't want to use that as a cop-out either. If your children have been baptized and left, that relationship should be severed. We must obey God's command.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). In an article titled “If One Is Disfellowshipped, Which Family Comes First?” Mr. Armstrong commented on this verse: “It does not say all except members of your flesh and blood family. It speaks of any who has been a Church member. And it says avoid them. It's a command, and if we try to be more kind, more righteous than God and disobey that command, we convict ourselves of disobedience of God's command” (*Good News*, April 1980) concluded by discussing Matthew 10, which says we must love our father and mother less than God.

I don't think there would be a difference between a marked person and one who is disfellowshipped.

There may be instances where the Church could get into legal trouble if parents are preventing children from seeing their Laodicean grandparents or similar situations. There have been instances where grandparents were able to have a strong relationship with grandchildren without interference from Laodicean parents; there was no hostility there and minimal contact.

In individual cases like this, a judgment must be made by the ministry about the propriety of the situation—in almost every case, that would be the regional director.

In the case of members who work for a Laodicean, we should counsel them to try to seek other employment; though, to preserve their livelihood, they would not have to cut that off immediately.

The principle to remember is this: There should not be any contact with converted Church members who have left, and that includes family members other than a mate.

Please remember as well that whenever we deal with people outside the Church—whether non-member mates or even Laodiceans—we should be as considerate and inoffensive as we possibly can. Even if their attitude is bad, we should be able to let our light shine by being considerate to them. There might be an exception if someone was attacking us, but “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

With love, in Christ's service,

Gerald Flury

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE DATES

The conference dates for 2006 are set for June 14-20. Unless directed otherwise by Mr. Gerald Flurry, all full-time ministers should plan to arrive on June 13 and depart on June 21. A letter inviting all ministers to the conference will be mailed out shortly. As in the past, only full-time ministers will have their expenses covered.

Looking forward to seeing you there. *Dennis Leap*

PYC DATES

The dates for Philadelphia Youth Camp 2006 have been set for July 5-25. Applications are now available from headquarters. Applicants should fill out the application and give it to their local minister as promptly as possible. The deadline for ministers to return camper applications this year is April 30.

CD AND TAPE POLICY

The CD and tape policy is being amended to account for the continuous late arrival of CDs in many areas of the United States and Canada. On Wednesday (December 7, 2005), we sent out a package to all recipients of the weekly CDs which included the sermon “Good is Not Good Enough” by Mr. Stephen Flurry, a backup Bible study “God’s Way” and a copy of this brief explanation.

For the Sabbath of *December 10th*, you should play “Uncovering Satan,” a sermon given by Mr. Gerald Flurry which was distributed “To be played in all Churches immediately.” Then, for the Sabbath of December 17th, you should play “Good is Not Good Enough.” After that sermon is played, then you should continue to play CDs in the order you receive them from headquarters. That means, in many cases, you or the CD recipient for each Church area will receive the CD at least one week before it should be played at services.

What we are doing is pushing the schedule back one week so each CD should arrive in plenty of time to be played in the same order they were given at headquarters. Each Church area will now hear the sermon sent from headquarters fourteen days after it was originally given.

The Bible study that was sent out with this same package should be held as a back-up Bible study CD in the event that your area has a defective CD or if the scheduled Bible study CD does not arrive in time via the mail.

We believe this will solve 95 percent of the problems we are facing on a regular basis with CDs not arriving on time for services. Each Church area should also now have a back-up sermon and Bible study CD that is held

over for use in an emergency.

Nothing else has changed on the policy. After a sermon or Bible study has been played in the Church area, it should be destroyed as in the past. No libraries are to be kept at all—with the obvious exception of the back-up CDs.

Printed with this article is the policy as it has now been amended.

Policy: Church CD and Tape Library (P-701)

Effective Date: August 11, 2003

Last Updated: December 5, 2005 

Scope: This policy applies to all who receive Church messages on cassettes or CDs around the world—regardless of their Region.

Description: All recipients of Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) media will adhere to the following policy regarding distribution of weekly sermon tapes/CDs:

Responsibilities

1. Only **baptized members** (in good standing) of the PCG are permitted to be placed on the distribution list to receive weekly sermon tapes/CDs. No other Church administration status codes are allowed to receive tapes (for example, no tapes/CDs for Prospective Members, Youth or Co-Workers).
 - a. Only Regional Directors are authorized to add/remove individuals to/from the tapes/CD list.
 - b. Only Church areas where services are held under the Regional Director’s establishment will be sent weekly sermon and Bible study tapes/CDs.
 - i. A congregation is defined as more than one family or individual who gather for services as directed by the Regional Director.
 - ii. There must be at least two different individuals/families that meet together, and that are designated by the Regional Director as a congregation before they can be placed on the tape/CD list.
 - c. A minister may be added to the list of recipients of weekly sermon and Bible study tapes/CDs with their Regional Director’s approval.
 - i. The same rules of destroying the tapes/CDs after they have been listened to apply. (Rule 3 below.)
 - ii. Every effort should be made to listen to the messages quickly, then destroy the copies.

- d. Sermons and Bible studies will NOT to be sent to isolated members who do not meet as an established congregation appointed by the Regional Director.
2. Recipients of tapes/CDs **are not permitted to keep libraries of PCG services (as distributed on tape/CD) in any form**—whether they are personal copies or not—no tape/CD libraries are allowed by the Church.
 3. Recipients of the tapes/CDs are to destroy the tapes/CDs after they have been listened to at services that week. The schedule allows for two weeks mailing time for the sermons/Bible studies to arrive. Sermons/Bible studies given at headquarters will be sent out and are expected to be played two Sabbaths later (or 14 days after the sermon was given at headquarters). The tapes/CDs should immediately be destroyed by breaking the CD in half, or spooling the tape out of the cassette and cutting or breaking the tape in a few places at random.
 - a. Tapes/CDs are not to be kept after services have been completed.
 - b. If a congregation needs to hear the message again, a copy can be obtained from the Regional Director only.
 4. A backup sermon and Bible study will be provided to each recipient on the tape/CD list which shall be held and used only in the event of a defective tape/CD received in the mail, or if the weekly tape/CD does not arrive on time.
 - a. If the backup is used, your Regional Director must be informed, so he can have the headquarters tape department dispatch a replacement back-up tape to be held for possible future use.
 - b. After the back-up tape/CD is played for services, it too should be destroyed as per Rule 3 above.
 5. If two messages are received in the mail (for example a sermon and a Bible study), and if your congregation will only use one message (for example if a Bible study was not planned for that Sabbath, or if a minister is traveling through and gives a live sermon message) then you should use the message given by the most-senior minister as the message played for services. Then both messages should be destroyed after services that week.
 - a. In other words, sermons or Bible studies are not to be “held over” until the following week for any reason.
 - b. The only exception would be the rare occasion where two sermons of Mr. Gerald Flurry are sent out. If there is only time to play one, then the second message should be held for one week to play immediately the following week for services.
 - c. After Mr. Flurry’s messages are played for services, they should be destroyed per Rule 3 above.
 6. Messages and special music on tapes/CDs are not to be copied by anyone in any form without the approval of your Regional Director. This includes copying in any analog or digital form, including computer file formats, by members, sound crews or tape librarians.
 7. Regional Directors will keep a full two year library from which they can issue tapes/CDs at their discretion—with the requirement that all “loaned tapes/CDs” are returned to them within two weeks.
 8. All tapes and CDs become the property of the Philadelphia Church of God, including those purchased locally for local recordings of sermons given by the local minister after they have the PCG copyright label affixed to them.
 - a. All taped Sermons and Bible studies given locally **MUST** be placed on tapes supplied by headquarters (with the Church copyright affixed). If you are in need of tapes, please contact the tape department at (405) 340-7474.
 - b. If a message is recorded locally, the tapes must be given to the local minister immediately after services.
 - c. Local ministers are then responsible for immediately forwarding those tapes on to their Regional Director.
 9. Tapes/CDs may not be loaned to anyone for any reason.
 10. When a message(s) arrives on tape/CD, please immediately spot check it to see that there is quality sound on both side A and B. CDs should be checked for scratches, audio quality, and consistency in labeling. If you receive a damaged or poor quality tape or a scratched and unusable CD, please contact the Cassette Tape Department at headquarters for a replacement. Call (405) 340-7474.
 11. Tapes/CDs are not to be listened to in their entirety before they are played in services.
 12. Requests for tapes/CDs of sermons or Bible studies given in the past must be made via your Regional Director. The headquarters Cassette Department cannot send tapes to individuals unless Regional Director approval has been given.
 13. Messages labeled: “To be played in all Churches” may be preempted at the discretion of the Regional Director. Generally, such messages should not be

delayed more than two weeks after they are received. Messages marked *To be played in all Churches immediately* may not be delayed unless approved by Regional Directors or Mr. Gerald Flurry.

14. Sermonettes and special music, in most cases, will be included on the CDs each week. If included, it is at the discretion of the Regional Director as to whether they will be played in any given Church area.

MEDIA SERVICES

KEY OF DAVID SCHEDULE

Program Title: "The Logos Vision"

Airdate: December 11, 2005

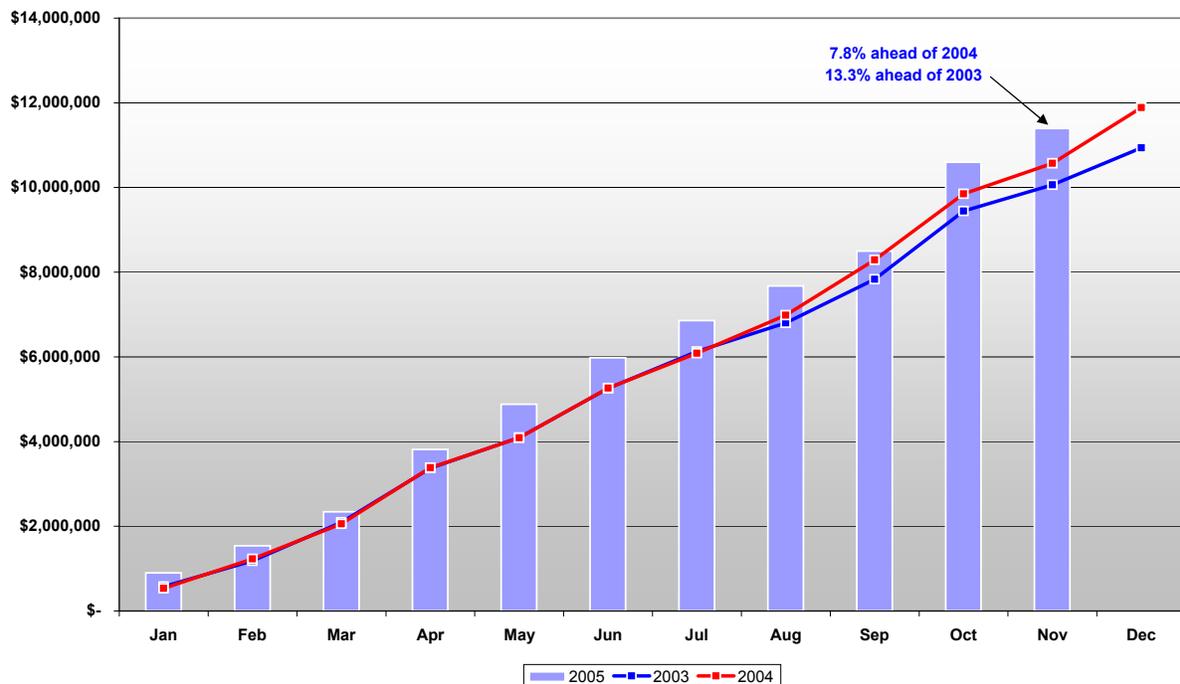
Literature Offered: *The Incredible Human Potential* and "Prophesy Again—Declaring the Mystery" reprint

Synopsis: The Apostle John had a deep understanding

of God's plan for mankind. But he also understood that God had a project *before* human beings—a project for the angels. Do you know about these two plans—and what God has planned for your life? Next week on *The Key of David*, Gerald Flurry discusses the Logos Vision.

BUSINESS OFFICE

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD CUMULATIVE U.S. CONTRIBUTION INCOME 2003-2005



COLLEGE NAME CHANGE

Mr. Flurry will be announcing the name change in his sermon this week, so please do not read this during announcements.

To avoid causing confusion between ourselves and Imperial College London, we have decided to change the college name.

We originally filed to register the name “Imperial College of Edmond” with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Imperial College London noticed it and temporarily agreed to our using the name. However, upon further review, they decided that they would not like us to use it. A two-year negotiation process began, where we suggested alternate names using the word Imperial.

Imperial College London was always cooperative with us. However, since we mail the Correspondence Course and other literature bearing the school name in Europe, they anticipated confusion with the name Imperial.

The new name of the college will be “Herbert W. Armstrong College.” The name had been brought up

even when the college was first being raised up in 2001. Chancellor Gerald Flurry again presented the suggested new name to the faculty about a month before the Feast of Tabernacles this year to get their feedback. On November 18, we officially applied for the new trademark.

Most of the time, the college name will be shortened to “Armstrong College,” with “AC” as the abbreviation.

The references to the college name will be changed in all our literature. All future lessons of the Correspondence Course will bear the name *Armstrong College Correspondence Course*. Correspondence Course lessons that still bear the name *Imperial College* will be used until supplies are exhausted. At that point, old lessons will be reprinted with the new name.

Mr. Flurry gave some more detail about the name change in his December 3, “Uncovering Satan” sermon.