

A House Divided

And if a house be divided against itself,
that house cannot stand.

Mark 3:25



Blow the Trumpet

Proclaiming the Gospel as a Witness

To All the Saints
In the Churches of God

Re: A House Divided

Dear Brethren,

The late Ronald Reagan, our nation's fortieth president, had a reputation for being a master storyteller. Often when giving a speech he would call to mind a humorous life experience or perhaps just a charming tale he had heard. One such story involved a Bible-school teacher and her class of six and seven year olds. At one point during a lesson, she asked her students, "Who wants to be in God's Kingdom?" At this point all the hands shot up enthusiastically, except for one--little Bobby in the back row. For some reason this young boy didn't provide the expected affirmative response. This really surprises the teacher--causing her to go to her pupil and investigate the matter further. "Bobby, I noticed you did not raise your hand," the teacher asks. "Yes mam," the young boy responds. Concerned with Bobby's answer, the teacher continues. "Don't you want to be in God's kingdom?" At this point, the young boy confidently answers. "Yes mam, I do. But not with that bunch."

This is a charming story and could easily be filed under the category of "kids say the strangest things." However, it would lose virtually all of its charm if this class were attended by adults instead of children--which brings me to the point of this letter.

Sometimes I think there is a little Bobby in all of us. This is because we often make similar pronouncements concerning brethren in other fellowships. We often see other Churches of God as being a little lower in the "hierarchy" of faith than the one we attend. There are some who even question whether groups other than the one they attend will even make it into the kingdom at all.

I have to admit it is easy to fall into the trap of comparing ourselves with each other. This, even though God's word specifically forbids such things (2Cor. 10:12). Additionally, when doing so we often engage in more personal attacks on other groups. For example: we often question their motives and second-guess their leaders. While we resent people imputing what drives us, we somehow think it is appropriate to assign sinister reasons to them. As a result it would seem that God's Church is now "A House Divided." These words are severe to be sure, but how else can one describe the Body of Christ? Today there are virtually hundreds of COG fellowships all clamoring for a prominent seat at Christ's table. Furthermore, many sincerely believe they deserve that seat. They see themselves as a favorite son of their Creator.

I have often wondered what God must think as He considers His children at this end time--what He must feel as He ponders the open discord that seems to permeate His Church. My personal belief is that if we were truly honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that our Father in Heaven is not pleased.

The real tragedy with the current state in the church is that we live in a time of such great promise for God's work. Imagine how the cause of His Kingdom could be advanced if His servants thought less about strengthening their own status and more about proclaiming a message of hope to His people, and a warning to the nations. If the two-fold commission truly was the focus of all of God's children, imagine the work that could be done. Not that a work isn't being done--for indeed it is. But how effective is that work when so many groups are all doing the same thing? In the corporate world this is known as a redundancy. And redundancies are not a good thing. Not only are they labor intensive, but they can also send conflicting messages. Virtually all corporate leaders would view such a duplication of effort as a reflection of poor organization and poor management.

Now imagine how a cohesive spiritual family could advance the cause of God's kingdom. In other words a united community of believers all working together to preach the gospel and feed the flock. Imagine the talents that are now diluted because of the division in the church miraculously coalescing under a common faith and unity of purpose. What a work this would be.

With this in mind, I thought it would be beneficial to explore some of the contributions that have been made by God's servants today--those who preside over some of the more prominent organizations within the body of Christ. I do this for three reasons: first, it is a personal and public statement of support for these fine men and their work. Secondly, it is an appeal to all of God's people to respect the great effort they are putting into serving God's people. Thirdly, it reflects a desire that these servants will one day walk as brothers. As you read each comment I sincerely hope you will keep all of them in your prayers as we at Blow the Trumpet do ours.

Furthermore, as you consider these men it is important to understand they are not perfect. However, neither were Peter, James or John. Nor were Paul or Samuel or Moses or Abraham or any of the prophets for that matter. Even men such as Elijah and John the Baptist were flawed. That is what makes God's work such a great miracle. He can perform it so nobly through the most unlikely of instruments.

At this point I must confess that I have personally known most of these men. Furthermore, my relationship with some of them has at times been tested (I speak to my own shame, not theirs). However, I can honestly state that I consider it a profound honor to have known them and regard each one a brother and more. I have arranged these men in no particular order.

Dave Pack The Restored Church of God

Mr. Pack is one of the most powerful and dynamic voices in God's Church today. His work although not great in numbers is a reflection of a steadfast commitment to the truth. Few people would have endured the labels many have placed on him, but he may just see them as something that goes with the territory. Personally, I for one think the Church owes Mr. Pack a huge debt of gratitude. He may have been more instrumental in exposing the great apostasy that took place within the body of Christ, than any other minister in the God's Church. His sermon series Thirty Reasons inspired virtually thousands of God's people (including myself) to take action concerning the doctrinal changes taking place in the Worldwide Church of God. I can't imagine God's hand not being a part of that courageous act. Today he continues to spend all his energies proclaiming a great message to brother and stranger alike.

Dr. Roderick C. Meredith
Living Church of God

Dr. Meredith has been a loyal servant in God's work for over fifty years. And although that, of and by itself, does not make him a hero in this era of the Church, there is something that does. When the Worldwide Church of God decided they were wrong about everything they had once believed and taught, and demanded that the ministry promote what it called "new truth," many pastors tried to discretely navigate their way through this newly created theological mine field. However, Dr. Meredith took a different path. Although respectful of the Church's new leadership, he refused to cave in to the immense pressure to "get with the program." As a result of his steadfast attachment to what he had proven long ago, Dr. Meredith was stripped of every responsibility he had as a leader in the Church. For years he quietly stayed true to the TRUTH. However, his silence was broken in a prayer given at the Feast of Tabernacles in Palm Springs. I was there when he acknowledged before God and in full view of men who had been swayed by another gospel, the service of Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, and the work God raised up through them. As I listened to Dr. Meredith's words, I knew his days in WWCG were numbered. However, I honestly believe the people in that auditorium were listening to greatness. On a personal note it is the only time in my life I ever wanted to applaud in services.

John Ritenbaugh
Church of the Great God

John Ritenbaugh may be the most thoughtful speaker in the Church today. His messages possess extraordinary depth and maturity and are among the most circulated in the Churches of God. I don't think he can imagine the mileage each of his sermon tapes gets as they are passed from member to member.

However, Mr. Ritenbaugh's greatest contribution to the Kingdom may be in something that is harder to see--his followers. Few communities of the faith are more committed to the truth espoused by the apostles than members of CGG. This fact alone speaks volumes about its leadership. I would openly encourage all of God's people to consider the depth of wisdom in Mr. Ritenbaugh's messages as well as the example of those who call him their pastor.

Mr. Gerald Flurry
Philadelphia Church of God

Gerald Flurry's contribution to the preservation of Mr. Armstrong's writings sets him apart from all other leaders in the Church today. His commitment to defending the many books authored by Mr. Armstrong were not mere words. While others "stood down" when the Worldwide Church of God threatened litigation if any COG group attempted to publish Mr. Armstrong's books, Gerald Flurry stepped up. He was willing to risk everything he possessed in defense of this cause and I am totally convinced that this courageous act was blessed by God Almighty Himself. I for one am profoundly thankful for not only the great VICTORY Mr. Flurry achieved, but also for the example of steadfast tenacity he displayed during this struggle.

Mr. Raymond McNair
21st Century Church of God

Raymond McNair is one of the early pioneers of God's work. For five decades he has served in numerous administrative positions under Mr. Armstrong and others. I am of the belief that this man brings two extraordinary gifts to the church. First he is an extremely talented writer. His work on the United States

and Britain in prophecy is by far, the best piece on this subject in the church. No group at any time has captured this very important subject with the skill Mr. McNair demonstrated in this endeavor. Personally, I think every COG group should help finance it and assist in taking its message to the nations. Furthermore, I hope Blow the Trumpet will do the same.

The second gift Mr. McNair brings to God's work is the great dignity he displays as a leader in the church. Raymond McNair is a true gentleman in every sense of the word. If I were responsible for selecting a man to represent God's people before world leaders, Raymond McNair is that man.

On a personal note, my most shameful moment in the church involved words of great disrespect I spoke to Mr. McNair. Although they were uttered several years ago, and although I am sure he has put them behind him, they still haunt me from time to time. I long for the day when they will be permanently erased from everybody's memory.

Mr. Roy Holladay:
United Church of God

I have never met Mr. Holladay personally so the obvious question is: Why include him in this collection of leaders? I do so because of the unique position the United Church of God holds within the body of Christ. The UCG is by far the largest single association to come out of the Worldwide Church of God since WCG introduced doctrines that God's people rejected long ago. With this said, we at Blow the Trumpet believe the accomplishments of UCG are considerable. One such gift it brings to God's people, and the world for that matter, is that it produces what I believe is the most informative magazine in the church today. The Good News is rich with articles that give relevance to the issues facing our world. It answers some of the great questions mankind faces today

However, there is something more that distinguishes UCG and its work. As an organization it places a great emphasis on nurturing God's people within local congregations. This is no small thing and it goes with our heart-felt gratitude and thanks.

Additionally, the United Church of God has a terrific reputation for its youth activities and camps. These are among the most well managed endeavors in the church today. They are also one of the most unifying projects in the body of Christ. Young people from numerous fellowships attend the UCG camps and leave with some of life's greatest lessons. This is a wonderful resource for all children who are a part of the church and it has our highest endorsement.



These are just a few of many true and faithful servants God has raised up during these last days. And although there is a great sadness that God's work is being done in fragments, it will not always be that way. We at Blow the Trumpet believe the great community of faith God raised up under the leadership of Jesus Christ and the apostles is in eminent danger. We believe it will soon find itself on the wrong end of great persecution. And as dark as this future may be, it will bring something positive with it. For you see, persecution has a way of bringing people together.

Pray for these men as well as the scores of unseen heroes in God's Church. And pray for unity.

Respectfully to all,

Dennis Fischer

Blow the Trumpet