

Today is *Part 6* of a rather long series and sometimes I get a little nervous about a long series like this in the sense of if everyone's interest is going to continue to be stirred up inside of them. I hope you do because this is about *Our Journey of Faith* and there's a lot of history here of things that are good for us to go through and discuss because there are lessons that are pertinent – always – there are profound lessons that we had to learn in God's Church; that God allowed certain things to take place and those lessons are still here for us today if we can learn from it and that's what this is all about as well. It's going back and being reminded of the journey we've been on, where God has taken us, what we've gone through to get where we are, what God has been doing. It's an awesome thing when you look back in time and you see what God has done. Sometimes when you're following God and you're going in a particular direction you don't know where He's leading you, you don't know all that He's working out; but God's in charge and God is always working out His plan and His purpose in our lives and so it's an exciting thing when you can go back and begin to put that together to see a pattern. There is a way that God works in life and it's exciting, it's inspiring – it truly is and He's blessing us to go through some of this at this time, at a time when we have somewhat of a lull because of where we are in time – thank God we have this at this time: that we're still able to come together like this. But for some people it's a little unsettling because of the idea we've had in times past where we've used the term 'great tribulation' and the belief of the Church was that when things began it was going to start off with a giant BOOM...and it hasn't been that way, thank God.

It's an exciting process of what we're going through and so today we are going to continue on with *Part 6* and we'll continue to bring out some of those lessons of things we need to be focused on because this isn't an easy time; but there has *never been* a real easy time for God's people. There have been periods where it's been a little easier but there have still been battles that have been fought and that had to be waged and certainly that never changes. The day you're not battling is the day you need to be concerned. The day that things aren't difficult for you in life, in God's way of life, because this world is not God's. Everything about this world is geared in a different direction and so if you come to a point in time where you're not having battles, where you're not having things to address in your life – hopefully not because of an obstinance on our part and a lack of a desire to change or a willingness to change and maybe a resistance to God's spirit (which is always a part of our life). But hopefully we are addressing things and making those changes as time goes along, because if we're not then we're in big trouble.

We were talking about a transition in time basically when we came through a period where God was no longer, in a sense, putting an umbrella over us, in the sense of coming under the protection as it is described in Revelation 12 of 'being under the wings of a great eagle'. And speaking of, in that particular case there, a matter of protection, is what it's all about, from Satan while we were scattered and God gave us great protection until He had strengthened us again as a Body, as a people; had reorganized us, established us again as a single Body in the sense of not being scattered any longer but being brought together in a way that God works. He works in one way. It is from the top down. That's the way God has always worked as far as government is concerned, as far as order is concerned and so again, those things happened to us by Pentecost of 1998. And so we've been going through this series about the publication called 'News Watch for the Church of God' because it tells a bit of the history, it shows what God was giving at any moment in time, what He was giving to the Church that went along with some of the sermons of course. And I mentioned about the May issue there just before Pentecost, that the article was entitled, '*DO YOU LOVE ME?*'

Because something very basic was being given to God's Church that we must have to be God's Church; and that is love toward one another. And that was sadly lacking in a Church that became scattered. We came to a point in time where God made it very clear why we went in the direction we did, why things happened in the way they happened, because the 'love of many waxed cold'. And as time went along it just got worse and worse and worse and what I saw in an area we were transferred to just before the blow up, the apostasy occurred, where there were all these cliques in the Church; different ones that grouped together that felt like they were better than others and it was a horrible thing to view because that's not God's Church. That's not the way God's people work. When people begin to segregate from each other, when they begin to pull away from each other and they have their little comfort zones and their little comfortable groups and others can't mix into that – something is desperately wrong and quite candidly a reflection God's spirit isn't there. And that's what we went through. And so God had us address something just before we were fully established here and as we were becoming established as a group once again, and that was a need for the love of God to live and dwell within us, because the reality is you *cannot love God* if you don't love one another. If we have *problems with anyone else in God's Church and cannot resolve them* we've got problems being in God's Church. If *our heart* isn't right toward *EVERYONE* whom God calls something is drastically wrong with us – truly. And yet sometimes through time I've had to deal with, which is a part of a pattern, something we have to do in the ministry over and over again, is get involved sometimes then in people's problems because they can't get along. Because they have conflict and they can't resolve it. It's a spiritual problem.

You know, a lot of you, because you're new you haven't experienced that in large part because of a type of protection in one sense you have and because of where we are in time. You don't meet Sabbath by Sabbath in most areas in the sense of a large group and a large congregation where you're able to be closer together and have fellowship perhaps even throughout the week or at different times in a stronger way. But with human beings, you're always going to be tried as to how well you get along with one another and God calls people of *many* different backgrounds, of *many* different ways of thinking – truly. Its one thing you can count on in God's Church – diversity. Wide variety. He doesn't call us all together as a group of people that are just naturally going to get along with each other, that just naturally connect perfectly. People that you would normally come in contact with in the world and become very close friends with, God doesn't work that way because we wouldn't learn anything if it was like that. We wouldn't grow if God did it that way, so God does it in a different way. He brings people of *many* different backgrounds together and as we read about in I John, in I John 5 especially... how can we help but love whom God has called and given His spirit to? If you are begotten of God, and someone else is begotten of God, how could you do anything else but love everyone who is begotten of God. And that's the bottom line. And if a person doesn't then that person is in deep spiritual doo-doo: just calling a spade a spade. You're in deep, deep trouble spiritually. And so again, going through those things and asking the question: 'Do you love me?' and going back and asking what, referring to what Jesus Christ said to Peter. And so it's reflected in our life and that's one of the most profound ways it's reflected in our life.

And then we went on to the next section there in June, once we were re-established as God's Church and we were able to stand! We came to a point in time where we were spiritually strong enough that we could now stand without that special umbrella from God! Where now we were close enough to God, strong enough in spirit that we could stand! That's what God charges us with anyway, the ability to stand! ...and to withstand: to stand against the wiles and strategies of the devil, of Satan, and of the demonic world. And that's what it was all about.

So God brought us to that point where we could do that – to be close to Him where we would stand *firm* in what He gave to us and any doctrine that came along that God gave to us was becoming stronger and stronger. That's what God was doing with us as a body, as a group, where everything else was getting weaker and weaker and more watered down. That's the way it went and has been going ever since. And so again, the article was, '*HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?*' and it was a matter of do we understand God's calling? Do we understand how God calls us? And that's still a very big message in God's Church today. It comes out in many different ways from Sabbath to Sabbath, month to month. Somewhere in the content of things that are being said oftentimes we're reminded...Do we grasp? Do we understand our calling? Do we *remember* and do we hold fast to understanding how God called us into the Church? *It wasn't by anyone's intellect! It wasn't by anyone's great ability to study the Bible! It was NEVER based on anyone's past and how close they were to God, because many people deceive themselves in those things and are still deceiving themselves in those things.* Don't ever think those things! ...that because of how you lived, that you lived better than others, or that you had this certain relationship with God, or you had this special gift from God, that because of that – then God wanted to bring you on into His Church! On the contrary; He says He calls the weak of the world, those who have problems, those who need help, those who are willing to humble themselves when they're called, those who are brought down.

I had to be brought down mightily before I was called. Most people have to be brought down a lot; otherwise we won't listen to God. It's exactly what is going to happen to this world. That's why this world has to go through so much trouble and so much heartache and so much pain and so much suffering because the *whole story is a magnified story of our lives! It's one of being brought to humility* so we will listen to God and so that we will begin to change. And so God's going to do that in a *massive way* on this earth, beginning with the scattered nations of Israel. It's a simple thing and it's simple to see that plan of God in a very powerful way and be *so inspired and so excited about it! Moved by it!* But the less we see it, and the less we grasp what God is doing the less inspired we'll be – see? And that's where the danger of beginning to fall asleep and beginning to drift and beginning to relax and take it easy begins to come in and you can never do that.

So again, in this particular article here from 'News Watch for the Church of God' in June 1998, asking people, '*HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN? Do you know how God called you? Do you know the way God works in His Church?*'. I want to pick up where we left off in this article because there are lessons in here for us today – see? We are at a point in time where God has given time for those He called to give more... a lot of this was done to give more experience to the Church, to help us prepare for a job that's ahead of us. So many of you are called for the purpose of helping the Church in that regard as well as the opportunity that God has a design and a purpose for you at this time for what's coming in the future. All this works together. God works everything together for a great purpose and it's exciting and so He has done these things to help us to get prepared for a time that we're going to be able to accomplish and do a whole lot more. If things hadn't happened the way they did, we wouldn't be organized right now, we wouldn't be prepared in the way that we are right now for what's coming, but God has blessed us to be prepared in the way *He* wants us to be prepared. No more and no less... we're not going to do more than what God give us and prayerfully, if we're responding properly, we're not going to do less than what He intends for us to do. He's going to get it done no matter what.

And so we're at a time right now where things have levelled off a little bit and they're going to continue to level off a little bit... He's going to call just a few here and there and it's exactly what He's doing. It's easy to see what God is doing because no one comes into God's Church without God calling them. It's

the only way you can come, it's the only way you can see what is true. God does the calling for the purpose of bringing you to *His* Church, so He can mould and fashion you and work with you.

And so we were going through a particular place here in I Corinthians 2 talking about how the carnal mind is not able to receive the things of God – it's not capable of doing so; that it's something that is only done by the holy spirit comparing spiritual things with spiritual because of God's spirit working within us and I want to pick up where I left off then.

Why do brethren forget how and why God called us and how He has worked with us?

I mention this to you because I hope that a lot of you who are newer are dumbfounded sometimes when you hear some of these things because it's sometimes very difficult to think: "How could this have happened to God's Church?" We're told some of these things – it's like, "I don't know how people could have done that!" And the danger in that is, "*I* wouldn't have done that." Yes you would. If you'd have lived at that time, you would have done exactly what the entire Church did. You would have been spewed out of God's mouth *like every other person* in God's Church. There are profound lessons to learn from some of these things – truly. And a great one is never allow yourself to be lifted up to think it can't happen to me. That's why you have to be on guard and be alert and spiritually watchful because the reality is, "Oh yes it can! Yes it can!" And it can still happen – see? Amazing.

I want to make a comment here: what blew my mind very early on was how people could come to a point in time where they wanted to wipe away what they'd received from Mr. Armstrong. That was happening in the late 80's and early 90's and Worldwide was getting rid of booklets and getting rid of 'Mystery of the Ages' and didn't want people to really use those anymore. That's really the thrust of a lot of it. And we got to a point by the time the Church was scattered that there were ministers *all over the place* who didn't want others in a congregation to even mention Mr. Armstrong's name. Amazing! People in 'United', people in 'Global', or 'Living' later on, told not to use Mr. Armstrong's name in prayers, not to use his name in sermonettes and speaking. Why? They use John's name, they use Peter's name, they use Paul's name, they speak of the apostles and things they learned from apostles. Some would go so far as to say, "He was a great teacher. I learned many things from him." I think of one man that said that over and over again to the point where it was a battle for me not to want to reach out and strangle him – in a spiritual sense. Willing to say that Mr. Armstrong was a great teacher. How blind! How foolish! There wasn't a person in God's Church then nor now today who would have anything of the truth whatsoever if God hadn't raised up Mr. Armstrong and did what He did with him during the time of Philadelphia. Not a one of us would be here today. You wouldn't be here today; I wouldn't be here today if God hadn't raised him up and did what he did through him in revealing and restoring truth to His Church, to God's Church, His own Church. It's awesome! But ministers forgot that. They *forgot* their calling. They forgot how God worked with them. If they had understood that calling they would have esteemed Mr. Armstrong in a right way, in a sound way – not to worship, but as much as they would Paul, or Peter, or John, or others and the words that they spoke and the things that they taught. They would esteem those things – see, and understand there wouldn't be one minister out there... There wouldn't be one minister out there if it wasn't for Mr. Armstrong and what God did through him. But they forgot all that.

You can forget how you learned the truth and I'll be so bold today as to say there wouldn't be a one of you here today if it wasn't for what God did through Mr. Armstrong and now through me. It's a reality. Matter of pride and haughtiness? Not one iota. It's a fact; it's a reality of life that everyone must address in their own life. That's why I can now say boldly and comfortably, "I am an apostle as well as a

prophet and there's more coming..." See? Because that's *my* job and it's just a reality of life. And so we get to a point in time where we begin to understand how we learned the truth and we don't learn it in any other way because God didn't give it to the Church any other way. Nobody figures it out on their own; nobody comes to understand what is true except that God give it and there's a way that God has always given His truth to the Church. Don't forget those things! Because you see, I've had to make an announcement today, and one last week, where some have forgotten. Where do you go? You get to the point where you deceive yourself into thinking you can have this special relationship with God because He's always been there for you. Really? Outside the Church?! Really?! Awesome what people can think and how far the mind can go, or they can go someplace else and find someone that agrees a little bit more with what they agree with and, "no, they don't teach everything that I believe but I'll be there with them." Unity? ...Oneness with God and God's spirit? Amazing! Anyway...

Why do brethren forget how and why God called us and how He has worked with us? The only reason we understand any of God's plan and purpose is because He opened our minds by the power of His spirit to freely give us what we have.

God does it by His spirit; He opens the mind and then we have to respond. Whether we'll respond with desire, thankfulness, with gratitude, with humility, and with obedience... going on...

We didn't figure it out on our own. When we heard the truth being preached we couldn't have understood it without God drawing us and giving us a *special calling* to become firstfruits.

At this point in 1998 we didn't have the concept of all you new people coming along. God still had not given us the reality and the ability to see and understand that there are going to be many called who are going to live on into a new age who aren't going to be a part of the firstfruits. But at that time we weren't focused upon that. We weren't there yet. God hadn't given that to us as a work yet. He was still working with people who were scattered that were going to be reunited as a part of a remnant...to work toward the time we're now in, that we've come into in the last couple of years – a time of a great burst of growth that the Church of God, to my knowledge has not experienced during Philadelphia and obviously not during Laodicea...percentage wise. Going on...

This is not hard to understand! But the actions of brethren and ministers alike reflect many have lost such understanding.

Going on, under the section called...

BRETHREN MISLED

In the scattered church today, ministers from different quarters are blatantly or unwittingly continuing the process WCG started of tearing down our calling. Ministers have failed to help brethren return to a strong confidence and excitement for their part in this special calling.

That's one trait I always appreciated about Mr. Armstrong. For him, that sense of urgency he had – he'd send out co-worker letters and he'd write certain things in **bold**, and it just jumped out at you when he did it. WHY? Because you could see that excitement and the strength he had because of what God was giving to him – a boldness and a confidence for what was being said. And so if you remember some of the things he's written – every once in a while it'd all be in CAPITAL LETTERS. Well, that just jumped out at you more, you know? And if you couldn't be moved by that, then you're kind of dead between the ears you know, spiritually. Again...

Ministers have failed to help brethren return to a strong confidence and excitement for their part in this special calling. Instead, some poke fun at, mislead, twist, or totally pervert the beauty of this truth.

One minister, who has a large sermon tape program and extensive radio program, totally discredits the reality of how God works in our lives. His perception of a calling is that God is allowing His truth to be preached in this world and all who hear it can then choose to respond and come into the church.

I hope you see the stupidity of such a statement! That isn't how God works. Just because something is preached, people can't just make a choice to accept it. There's one program out here where a minister gets up on occasion, in one of the scattered groups, 2nd largest if you know, and he gets up there and talks about, "If you'll just open up your Bibles and follow me and read what I'm saying here, you will understand, you will see this." And I foam inside a little bit because I think, "*No you can't!*" Unless God's giving it to them they can't see it. You can't lie like that to people and say, "If you'll just open up your Bible and follow me along right here you can see what I'm saying, you can see this truth!" That's a bunch of bull! That's like any one of you going to your neighbour... you've learned it is not possible. You know what it's like and say, "If you'd just follow along with me you can see what I believe..." You give them, '2008-God's Final Witness'. "Read it, you'll be excited like I am!" And you come back and you find out – *whew...* they think you're nuts, they're attacking you, they think you're weird. No, they *know* you're weird, you know? That you would believe something like this? You're following a false prophet! All the things they say... because they can't see it. They can't hear it unless God gives it to them. That's just a reality of life – see? God is always in it – always, always, *always*. Amazing! But people forgot that. Ministers forgot that by the hundreds! Amazing... going on...

...the people then can choose to respond and come into the church. [if they just hear it] This is false! Just because someone hears the truth does not mean they can choose to respond at this time. The Father has to draw them with His spirit before they can make such a choice.

Jumping down a little farther...

Another minister who has an extensive tape program stated in a sermon that there are 100,000 Messianic Jews who have now come under the grace of Jesus Christ.

I think, how blind! *What a dumb thing to say for anyone who was ever part of God's Church! '100,000 Messianic Jews have now come under the grace of Jesus Christ?'* You know what that means?! *It means you've been forgiven of your sins!* To come under the grace of Jesus Christ means that God is drawing you, working with you, going to baptize you into the Body of Christ. That's the *ONLY way you can come under the grace of Jesus Christ!* And that's a damnable lie! You know?! And yet people swallowed it out here right and left. There are groups that follow people like that you know, and I'm talking about 1998... amazing what took place! Going on...

Such statements cause confusion or lead people off course concerning the truth of God's calling. Brethren can begin believing Messianic Jews are called of God to be firstfruits for the purpose of the first resurrection. People will listen to ministers make such declarations and by doing so begin to veer off course. Do people bother looking at the beliefs of such groups to see if their minds have indeed been opened? It doesn't take much work to reach sound conclusions. One of the largest of these groups states they, "believe in one God as declared in the Sh'ma [I don't know

how to pronounce that] who is eternally existent in three persons: God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit.”

So you think *they've* come under the grace of Jesus Christ? Give me a break! Because that's their beliefs – even within the Messianic Jews as a whole – not everyone, but as the vast majority it is. So what do you do with that? You throw it out the window because it's a bunch of bull, amazing! But we were torn apart in God's Church. We were so weak, even as God was blessing us to get back on course, but He was giving us messages, the truth, of things we needed to hear to make people strong; to help people become strong again in the truth, in His truth. Going on down farther in the article...

There are other misleading or misguided practices that sway the hearts of brethren, but can also be areas of distraction and watering down of a clear understanding of *our special calling*. Should we be putting great effort and expense into reaching out to obscure Sabbath keeping groups in other parts of the world?

Because some groups were starting to do this – reach out to some who are keeping the Sabbath over in Asia, and over in Russia, and not to the scattered Church, not trying to give a message out there to help people who were scattered out here. Think... where is God's concern for those He had to spew out of His mouth? Do you not think it was first and foremost with those who were spewed out? You think that was an easy thing for God to do? We can't even begin to comprehend how hard it was for God to allow so many thousands of people come to a point in time, because of a great purpose of something that mankind must learn in a profound way, what a great way to teach it... to allow His children to continue to become weaker and weaker and weaker in order that mankind be able to learn from that great lesson: that with the impregnation of God's spirit you can fall asleep spiritually. You can become lukewarm and of no value to the family of God. You can never become lukewarm in God's Church. God cannot use that. You must be hot. You must be on fire. You must be stirred up. You must be excited about what you hear from Sabbath to Sabbath and if you ever come to a point in time *when you're not* you're in such grave danger spiritually – truly. You have to cry out to God and ask Him to help you be stirred up and excited and inspired by what He gives – see? Because I'll tell you, today there are those of you out there listening who are not *stirred up and excited from Sabbath to Sabbath* by what you're hearing because you're letting down spiritually and allowing some sin to creep into your life. See, I know it already. Don't let it happen to you. Catch a hold of that. Understand the danger of it. Because you are no different than those who lived through that period of time. You have carnal human nature but you've been blessed with the impregnation of God's spirit – use it! Stir it up! Stir up that gift that God gives to you! You have to ask God for help to stir up His spirit, you truly do. You have to fight against sin – see? You have to wage war against sin. You have to repent day by day by day . And when you're not fighting those battles, you become weak.

If you *THINK* that you're doing pretty good... If you *THINK* that, and you *judge* in your mind and see others who are doing rather poorly in the Church...but I'm doing pretty good... “I can see others who have faults and problems and sins, but overall, I'm doing pretty good.” Now, you may not say those words that way, but certain actions sometimes can give a person away because of how you live and how you think will reflect how you truly feel about yourself – okay? If you don't believe day by day, week by week... you don't have to think it every day...hope it doesn't hurt... ‘o wretched man that I am’. If you don't understand your human carnal nature and how ugly selfishness is... I hate it when I respond improperly to someone in the world, I truly do. I hate it! ...when I allow peoples selfishness out there to get to me in such a way that I don't respond to them in the way that I should, out of love, out of understanding, out of patience. Because sometimes we just don't do that. Sometimes you don't always

respond the way you should – spiritually – to people around you. It's our carnal human nature and we all have it – too much.

Is the fact they live in another part of the world [again] somehow a sign they need more help in order to come into the Church?

In other words, it's like they're going out to look for anyone who thinks the Sabbath is the seventh day...

Or are those people already considered part of those who are called to the first resurrection and themselves already in the Body of Christ? If that is the case, why do some of those people refuse to change from their Pentecostal beliefs?

So this gets back to a section here where 'United' was sending some over to Russia to deal and help some people over there because they had read some literature and they made some kind of comments of a relationship there and they had interest in the Sabbath and yet they wanted to continue on in their Pentecostal ways. Anybody who comes into contact with God's Church and won't repent of their Pentecostal ways – they're not coming into God's Church. If you don't repent of sin, you're not going to come into God's Church – that's the bottom line. And that ought to reflect real quick like, save people a lot of money in worrying about people in other parts of the world: if they're not responding to you, if they're not changing, if they don't believe everything you do and growing in that very clearly – where's God? So why pump money into that if God's not there? Anyway, that's what we were dealing with at that point in time. Going on...

What a shame brethren and especially ministers have forgotten how powerful God's Spirit is in leading us and converting us when the Father has called us. What a shame ministers have forgotten the basic tenets of the working of the Holy Spirit to lead us into such basic truth once we are called.

In other words, there was no excuse for those things to have happened in God's Church. If we could only keep in our minds, a calling, a special calling that God the Father is the one who draws us, and calls us and opens up our minds. And it doesn't take very long talking to someone being drawn by God's spirit to see – they're being drawn by God's spirit – something's at work here, how could we talk along the same, how could we believe the same thing, how could such a miraculous thing happen save God is in it? And that's the answer.

Toward the end of this particular article... again...

The subject of our calling is of deep and timely importance to God's scattered people. We need to be thoroughly grounded...

That's what this was all about – God *grounding us thoroughly* in the most basic of doctrine so that we could stand and grow, and so that God could strengthen us even more powerfully as His Church in doing what was ahead and what is now in front of us. It's an awesome thing how far God's brought us since 1998. Here we are – eleven years down the road – incredible what has taken place, what we've experienced and where we are now, the strength we have, especially in those who are with us at this point in time.

We need to be thoroughly grounded in how God's calling works in our lives.

All of *you* need to be thoroughly grounded in how God's calling works in your lives. This is a very basic thing that you want to make sure that you're deeply grounded in here in the beginning – truly – to understand how God drew you, how He called you, what He called you to, where He brought you... Because if you see those things and believe those things, you will not waver, you won't be like a ship tossed by the waves, you know, wavering back and forth – you'll be right on course with what God is doing. Going on...

Otherwise we can be easily misguided and begin to envision serving God in ways He does not want. You need to be sure of your calling and what it means for your life.

That hasn't changed. In July of that year...

AN APPEAL TO ALL ELDERS!

A whole article here about crying out to different elders, knowing full well they're not going to listen. Why listen to me? I'm nobody...at that time there especially – absolutely nobody. Didn't know what God had called me to at that point in time in any fashion or form – didn't know that God had re-established the Church at that point in time into one organization. It wasn't until later on that we became bold in saying this is the *ONLY PLACE* where God is working, and some people flinched at that. Then by that, you're saying, that God isn't working in 'United' and 'Living' and 'Global'? ...and that's exactly what we came to in time but we weren't there yet at this point. We weren't there yet...to understand what God was doing and having a boldness in that.

Going on in August, 1998, the title...

FAMINE! WHAT FAMINE?

It's amazing! This is what we were living through in God's scattered Church. It was all around us. Anyway, in this article here jumping on down a ways...

One way to grasp our state of *dysfunctional denial* is by better understanding a common problem being experienced within today's church. This takes us back to the title of this article: "Famine! What Famine?" Many brethren do not acknowledge the Church is scattered and even more fail to recognize the factors that have led to a scattering.

Those of you who are new, you look at this and you think... "Over 500 groups? And to say they weren't scattered?" Seems a little odd maybe to you to look back at that and say, "How could different organizations out here say that the Church wasn't scattered," and yet that's what they believe. They don't believe we were scattered; because if you say we're scattered then you have to acknowledge some other things that God has said. Oh, they'll acknowledge, yes, we're scattered all over the place – but not as a result of what this article is discussing and what we were addressing at the time. Going on...

The conditions that have led to the scattering of God's people can be likened to a *famine*. God's word declares,

And this is **Amos 8:11**: this was prophesied and we have lived through it as far as the scattered body out here.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord [Eternal] God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:” (Amos 8:11, KJV).

Amazing! We lived through that... a famine in the environment of God’s Church and people who were scattered who no longer were receiving spiritual food any longer.

Jumping on down in the article toward a section here called...

LAMENTATIONS

You know this is a book of the Bible that isn’t used very much. We’ve lived through Lamentations for God’s Church in a very profound way. Things that were written in that book that were for the end-time, about the Church. Amazing how God inspires things to be written of those things that are going to happen in the future that are going to come to pass. In this article here...

Lamentations prophesies well of our attitude. We have become hardened and dull of hearing. As God’s people,

My encouragement to you is don’t allow yourself to become that way. Because the longer this goes... See, you might be looking to the completion of the first 140 days, the ‘half a time’ and thinking, “Okay, on that day or the next day *something BIG is going to happen!*” And nothing big happens... haven’t we learned; have we learned our lesson well? Maybe something will happen before that. Maybe it won’t happen for another 140 days after that. You don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know when the 2nd Trumpet blast is going to take place. I don’t know when the things that have happened as far as the economy and many of the things that have to do with the 1st Trumpet blast are more fully accomplished and fulfilled. I don’t know when that final drop is going to come as far as this economy and as far as the dollar’s concerned. Could happen tomorrow... could happen next week...could happen next month. It could happen next year. If it does happen next year; I’m going to tell you a great truth right now... there are many of you listening today who will not be here. You can’t make it if you’re not doing the things that I’m talking about – about being on guard, as I mentioned last Sabbath; about being close to God... because only God can give you what you need to continue to follow Him with boldness and confidence of spirit – see? There are awesome things that God is working out and sometimes if it doesn’t work out the way *I think* it should – be careful. Be thankful for the time God has given to you. I know one day we’re going to be dumbfounded in what the fast we held about a year ago was all about (little less than a year ago now); when we had a two day fast. One day you’re going to be able to look back like we are today at things we’ve gone through and you’re going to be *dumbfounded* in how God answered and how God has worked with us – very mercifully so. Going on in this...

We have become hardened and dull of hearing. As God’s people, we have much for which we must repent. But who really believes that? Not many!

Quoting here in Lamentations 4; so it says...

Let’s look at what Lamentations has to say. *“How the gold has lost its lustre, the fine gold become dull!*

It’s like the word of God – the *gold* that God gives to us, that which is *RICH* that God has given to us. It’s lost its lustre. That’s what happens when people begin to become lukewarm. That’s what happens

when people begin to let down – the word of God isn't *exciting* anymore! It isn't *inspiring* anymore! ...and it begins to lose its glitter, its lustre, its beauty. Don't ever let that happen in your life! Going on...

The sacred gems are scattered at the head of every street. How the precious sons of Zion, once worth their weight in gold, are now considered as pots of clay, the work of a potter's hands!"
(Lamentations 4:1-2, NIV).

The Church has become dull in every way, especially dull of hearing. We are no longer bright lights reflecting the ways of our God to the sick [and dying] world around us.

What an awesome thing that each of you have been given the opportunity to do – to be a light. I don't care whether it's at your work, or in your community, or wherever you are... that you're a good neighbour, that you're someone at work who treats the people at work in a way that a lot of the other people don't. In other words, people should see something different about you, about how you treat them; different from the world around them - truly! That you're down to earth, that there are certain principles you live by in how you treat them and how you talk to them: that you're not someone who goes around and talking about other co-workers behind their back to a co-worker. Because that's common place in the world where people tear down one another on the job, in the business place, sometimes to get ahead, or to be made to look better, or whatever it is. A lot of *sick* things have happened out there... people in the grocery store see that you treat them a little bit better than the normal person coming through the line who is selfish and anxious and impatient and so forth. You understand what I'm saying? A lot of people out here have tough jobs dealing with the public and if you can be someone that comes along and you give something... that doesn't mean that they have to know you are a member... "Oh, you're in the Church of God – PKG!" They don't know who you are, they don't know what you are, but they should see something different in you – that's the point in all this because you *are* different in how you're treating them and how you're dealing with them. Going on here...

We are no longer bright lights reflecting the ways of our God to the sick world around us. Indeed the "*sacred gems*" (NIV), or as *The Living Bible* states it, "*the inlaid Temple walls*" are scattered. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states, "*the precious sons of Zion...have been thrown out like broken pottery and lie scattered...*"

That was us; that was the Church for a time and what had happened to us.

In Daniel 12:7 the Hebrew word for "scattering" means "*to beat into pieces*" or "*to shatter*" like a piece of pottery (Psalms 2:9). God's people are NOT what they used to be. Our condition is deteriorating rapidly!

And then it goes on here in **Lamentations 4:3**:

"Even the jackals feed their young, but not my people, Israel. They are like cruel desert ostriches, heedless of their babies' cries. The children's tongues stick to the roofs of their mouths for thirst, for there is not a drop of water left. Babies cry for bread but no one can give them any"
(Lamentations 4:3-4, TLB).

You can read something like this now and it doesn't have a great deal of meaning, but there are those in this room right here... we lived it, we know what Lamentations means in the Church of God, to have such pain and hurt because of what you see people have chosen to do and how they've chosen to live

their lives. That cuts deep inside. Lamentations is a word, and some of us have had great sorrow at different times in our life of things we've experienced, but when it comes to the Church of God – there has never been a time like what we went through in the Church when the scattering took place.

Going on farther down in the article...

Brethren starve while many of the shepherds, like the ostrich, are sticking their hands in the sand and not hearing the cries of the flock. They are not tuned into the real needs of the brethren.

Isn't it amazing, some of you who lived through that – you remember back what people were doing and what they weren't doing and what they should have been doing... to reach out to help people who were scattered. **Verse 5-6:**

“Those who used to eat fastidiously are begging in the streets for anything at all. Those brought up in palaces now scratch in garbage pits for food.

Do you know what this is about? It's about where God's people were after they'd been spewed out of God's mouth, after they were scattered all over the place – those who used to eat in great feasts as it were spiritually, when Mr. Armstrong would preach, when ministers (who were faithful), would preach what they'd been taught and how brethren were fed mightily. And at a time like the Church had never been fed because there was never a time when you're able to record... I mean we had tape libraries – this was new to God's Church, you know? Incredible! And what a tool that was. The ability to send out printed material to people quickly. The ability to hear something on a radio, the ability to hear something on a TV, to be inspired and to keep focused on what God was doing in this world. To be able to read magazines that were sent out once a month – because of what God was doing in the world. We were given riches but how did we use it? Story of Laodicea.

“Those brought up in palaces now scratch in garbage pits for food. For the sin of my people is greater than that of Sodom,

What we did was far worse than what happened in Sodom and why God destroyed it and there are people in God's Church who couldn't grasp that. They couldn't understand... why is it so much worse what we did in the spiritual *adultery and idolatry* before God of what we did? Why is that *so much worse* than what Sodom and Gomorrah, or others did in times past? Because we *had* the impregnation of God's spirit and what did we do with it? And so God calls a spade a spade and He said we sinned many times worse! What we did was so sick and hideous, it really was! What anyone does who let's down spiritually, who begins to become anti-Christ... that's what happens when you begin to resist God's spirit in your life and you begin to fight against the very spirit of God, you begin to fight against the very reason why Jesus Christ died, so you could be forgiven of your sins, so that God the Father could dwell in you, so that Jesus Christ could dwell in you and you in them. We let down in those things and we go by the wayside, because of sin, because of selfishness, because of *pride*... because we can't humble ourselves before God! So we'd rather strike out at God's Church and God's ministry or whatever than to acknowledge sin in our part? That's the way man is. What a sick thing! We've got to fight against those things! Going on...

“...For the sin of my people is greater than that of Sodom, where utter disaster struck in a moment without the hand of man” (Lamentations 4:5-6, TLB)

In other words, God took care of something very swiftly and He did with us as well – to learn great lessons; the greatest lesson for the Millennium is going to be what happened to Laodicea. One of the greatest lessons *ever* during the Great White Throne is going to be what happens at the end of the Millennium and what happened to Laodicea. Those are going to be the most profound of lessons for people to understand. Going on...

We have passed the time of feasting on an overabundance of spiritual food. Most of the church...

And that was speaking of all those who scattered, not understanding that God had already re-established it and that He was working only in one place at that point. I didn't understand that, I didn't know that, I wasn't presumptuous to believe something like that. God had to take us through a lot more to bring us to a point in time where there was no other answer; so that we could boldly say and boldly understand - without haughtiness, without pride - this is just the way it is. Going on...

Most of the church now suffers famine because of the condition of the ministry. When God's people are hungry and not being fed, they will go out in search of food. Unfortunately, unsound doctrines abound and too many are unwittingly feeding in "garbage pits" (some translations, more graphically, call them "dung hills").

That's what God calls it. That's what people are left to if they're not fed by the ministry, and they're seeking something that they're missing from the past. They don't know what it is, but they're trying to recapture it and what do they do? They'll go out to some other group out here, or listen to this tape over here or some idea over here and after a while they're so far out in left field... so far away from the trunk of the tree... so asleep, so much in a coma! ...that some have said they were in, because they acknowledge what is reality – that's where we were and God had to shake us out of those things and bring us back on course. Going on...

Brethren are becoming easy prey to charlatans, false ministers, and crack pots who are only making merchandise of them. One of the primary purposes of *News Watch* is to warn brethren and expose these kinds of dangers to God's scattered flock.

What an incredible thing to be able to look back and see what God was doing. We went through a period of time in September and finally we came up to the fall; Oct/November 1998: Feast of Tabernacles time. The first time after being re-established as God's Church we had a Feast site up in Niagara Falls. Going all the way back to April of 1998, just before God had re-established the Church, we had an ordination in the group – Terry Wrozak was ordained an elder. Then at the Feast of Tabernacles, Johnny Harrell was ordained. That was our beginning. We had another individual who had been ordained back in the period of 'United' who later betrayed us, betrayed God, betrayed Jesus Christ. I look back at the things we've lived through and people we walked to God's house side by side – even after the apostasy and these things were still ongoing. Why? Because of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Seal were still coming to pass; the destruction of God's Church. It didn't all happen when the 1st Seal opened...it didn't all happen with the 2nd...it didn't all happen with the 3rd... but the 4th has been ongoing. The effects of the 4th Seal are *still* ongoing – incredible! A destruction of those who were scattered. Pretty much did its work already but the effects are still out there. Only God and God in His time will awaken people and will cause people to come to repentance.

But anyway, what an incredible thing to look back and show that God was giving us a framework here to work from, to work with and I think of the different ones who came up there to Niagara, there are a few

of you here today. I think of those over in the Detroit and Toledo area... *there were so many from that area* and there are so few with us today. Amazing! Because the effects of the apostasy continued to work and people forgot the exact thing I just went through a moment ago – our calling and how God calls us, how He works with us, how He strengthens us in the truth...and people forget. I think of those down in Cincinnati and different areas like Georgia – the ones that came along. Incredible times! And so the article that came out at that time was...

“WHERE IS GOD?”

“Where is God?” Want to read some of this because, again, incredible lessons that are learned as we go through this journey of faith that so many of us have been on for a period of time that we can all learn lessons from that you can’t afford not to learn – truly.

A question begging to be answered in the Church today is, “Where is God?” Far too many people would not even ponder such a question. Why? Because the Church has strayed farther away from God than many suspect.

The overwhelming majority of problems within the Church today are the result of sin. Sin produces confusion, and the Church is filled with confusion. This leads ultimately to the question, “Where is God?”

I don’t know if we can appreciate and understand how God has worked with us at the end-time here. Because of technology... when I think of that, I think of Mr. Armstrong’s words, of how *inspired* he was, of how *excited* he was *always* when he spoke of technology that came along at the right time to do things that God was doing in the world; the printing press. If you go back and you look at some of the story of how they began to crank out ‘the Plain Truth’ magazine on one of those old mimeographs. I used one when I was in high school and you had this ink thing in there and it was messy and they cranked that Plain Truth out. It was stapled together and sent it out to people because of what he was doing on radio, starting in a small way up in Eugene, Oregon. There used to be a time in the Church when we used to have work projects at our house up in Perrysburg and then later down in the Cincinnati area and in the beginning especially when we had tapes going out. And even with the books going out we had to have these stamps, different quantities of stamps in order to equal a certain amount to be sent out and here we had to go through this laborious task of taking off these peels on the stamps. Some we had to wet down. Oh what a hard thing to do! ☺

And then Laura read one time in the ‘Autobiography’ of how Loma had to mix up the paste. She had to make the paste to put on the back of the stamps in order to mail out what they mailed out. We thought we had it tough because we had to put a sponge piece that holds a little bit of water and then finally we had the peel-off and you still had a combination of 3-4 stamps in order to equal the right amount. And people were begging me to get something like... what is that company? Neopost®; some of those Pitney Bowes® type of thing. We got Neopost® and within about 2 months time we paid for all of the equipment. You look back at what they did and yet the progress of things and finally the massive way of some of these printing presses and what they were able to do with ‘the Plain Truth’ and then radio and Mr. Armstrong talking about radio and how it went out to the world, and Radio Luxemburg and then those ‘pirate ships’ off the coast of England because they wouldn’t allow Mr. Armstrong to have a broadcast. The government of Great Britain wouldn’t allow something like that to come in, but Mr. Armstrong, because God was leading him and guiding him showed him how to circumvent that and he paid to be on those ‘pirate ships’ that were outside the boundaries of Great Britain. I think a movie was

done about these 'pirate ships' or something. I don't know how much is true or wasn't true – didn't see it, but anyway, I saw it advertized at one time. But it was a real thing. 'Pirate ships'... so, "Yes, the Church of God was on 'Pirate Ships'!" And the foolish things that people out here want to find fault with that God does.

Mr. Armstrong did that and talked about technology and then finally TV came along. What an incredible tool! Massive communication and then for the Feast of Tabernacles we had these trucks pull up with these great big dishes and all of us across the United States and up in Canada and different parts of the world at different times of the day were able to hear Mr. Armstrong during the Feast of Tabernacles! Technology!

And it was nothing compared to what was coming with computers and I marvel today what God has brought us to be able to do with technology. If Mr. Armstrong could have had some of the things we have today: word processing programs, desktop publishing and graphic applications, it's amazing. The first thing we came up with was 'Time is Running Out' and we got pictures and we were able to use the computer and I was able to do it. I was able to do different things; Jeremy helped me out at different times with things and some of the work but here you could print up your own publication. If Mr. Armstrong could have done that in his time, if he'd had that technology there'd have been so much more done because he was a man on fire and put's me to shame in the sense of the drive he had and the abilities he had in those areas of writing and so forth and incredible what he could have done. To think you could sit down and write a book, format it and put everything together, send it to a printer yourself and have them print it. No, we had huge departments at Pasadena that had to help in these things and all the formatting of things and all the work that had to be done because that technology wasn't there and today, with your own little computer and your own little desk you can do it yourself.

Incredible what God's blessed us to do. And I hope you understand why He's done it the way He has. That though we be scattered there is a primary way He has taught within the Church. We went through a phase in the Church where we began to streamline things because of travel. I had to make decisions that were difficult in some of those areas. One of the things we began to address was to no longer have sermonettes because I had to travel between Cincinnati and Toledo where we had Sabbath services and because of some of that time and the stress and so forth in there, frankly God was giving me more to say, more to do, that we just cut out sermonettes. What a whiplash in the Church. There were people who were frothing mad that they couldn't speak anymore. And people made such comments... one individual coming up to me because he couldn't speak at the Feast. He was like, "You're hogging up all the time! Who are you?! What? I'm not being allowed to speak. I have things to *give* to the Church!" I thought... "Well, with that attitude it just shows you don't have anything to give to the Church." I didn't tell him that way but people didn't understand how God was working and what He was bringing us to and He was taking us away from that so there would be one voice. He brought us to a point in time when there was just going to be one voice and I hope we understand why now it's worked that way. Even Worldwide; why it's worked that way. It's for the sake of unity and oneness. It's easier. It's far more guaranteed in that respect that we have unity and oneness; where whatever is being done is being done all over the world. If some other individual is going to speak, it's going to be that voice that is heard all over the world. Not different ones out here in different areas preaching and doing their own thing. That's what led to our problems in time and we don't have time like that. God has streamlined us so we are able to have a very powerful single message going out and that's why, very powerfully so within the Church we have stressed a greater magnitude of importance that *everyone* come into unity and oneness with everything that's on the website. That's stressed very powerfully so to the elders in

the Church: that they be in unity and oneness with everything that's on the website; unity and oneness with everything that's on the FAQ; unity and oneness on how to do things.

If they're told to get off Facebook, they get off Facebook...except for one who didn't think he had to. I didn't find that out until later on. The 50th Truth? That we all be in unity and oneness about the 50th Truth... so I come to find out later on that one elder wasn't. Amazing!

God has given us these things for unity and oneness and if any of you are not in unity and oneness...and I speak these things boldly before God, you're in the wrong Church. You're in the wrong place. If you have doubts; if you're not in unity and oneness with everything that's on there, you're just in the wrong Church; you're in the wrong place. That's just the reality of it. And so God has blessed us to be in unity and oneness because it's so awesomely important that we understand 'atonement,' being truly at one with God on a spiritual plane. There are going to be some things I'm going to bring out later on about the Thunders that is profound, if you can understand it all spiritually, of what God did there and what He's doing. It's incredible! But we have to be able to see it in a picture, a complete picture of what God is doing and why He's doing it that way and it goes to one word – atonement.

Going on here, 'Where is God?' In all the things that were happening in the Church, going on in the article later on...

GROPING IN THE DARK

Confusion and uneasiness continue to grow within the scattered Church of God. Many have returned from the Feast with conflicting reports and perceptions, even when they have attended the same sites and heard the same messages. Why such confusion?

You'd think at the Feast of Tabernacles, that we'd have people coming back and what they would hear about is what the Millennium and the Great White Throne means. People weren't hearing those things during the Feast of Tabernacles in the different scattered groups. On occasion there would be somebody who'd speak about that but you'd think on Pentecost people should hear about Pentecost and that wasn't happening in the scattered group. On Trumpets you'd think people would hear about the meaning of Trumpets, but they weren't hearing about the meaning of Trumpets. On Atonement... and on and on the list goes. Incredible! Going on... again...

Why such confusion?

Sensitivities seem to be increasing, not decreasing. Deep wounds are not healing. Some ministers, becoming frustrated by the growing sensitivities of brethren, have reacted with impatience, criticism, control, and compromise.

Rather than speak from deeply-held spiritual convictions of what is right according to God's Word, scores of ministers have been attempting to keep peace by trying to appease opposing groups and beliefs within the Church. They work to maintain a pseudo-peace.

The largest group is kind of like the 'Catholic Church' of the scattered church of God. You can come in with different ideas and different beliefs. You can have ministers who have different ideas and different beliefs in certain doctrines and you can kind of mesh it all together. You can't do that in God's Church, it doesn't work. Going on...

This situation has led many ministers to recoil into a shell of self-protection, self-preservation and self-enhancement, while distancing themselves from genuine care and concern for the brethren.

Rather than standing firm in preaching sound truth from God, some have resorted to carnal administrations in a feeble attempt to keep the Church “under control”.
Instead of standing firm in God’s Word,

And that’s where God had brought us, to a point of standing firm. You’ve got to take a stand on God’s word and what you believe, that’s what it’s all about, isn’t it? Being firm, sound, willing to do whatever it takes to stand firm. That’s what faith is all about – boldness, confidence.

Instead of standing firm in God’s Word, many ministers have grown weary of dealing with opposition and difficult questions.

Do you? This isn’t just about ministers. Do you in your family, sometimes in order to have a pseudo-peace, a false peace, circumvent things that should otherwise be addressed? Husband to wife, wife to husband – when something spiritual is out of kilter and really needs to be addressed if you ‘love’ one another... children to parents, parents to children... parent’s to children especially... those kinds of things. Are we willing to take those stands that we need to in God’s way of life? Because we have to. Brethren to brethren? Going on...

The easy way out is to just feed the brethren pabulum in hopes that the pseudo peace can be maintained. Sadly, that is actually what most brethren seem to prefer. Many have become so weary in the Christian fight that they aren’t willing to face the hard truth, preferring instead to hear smooth things.

Don’t ever get to that point where you want to hear something smooth – where you don’t want your toes stepped upon, where you don’t want to hear something about your human nature or the battle that’s in front of you. Sometimes we get weary and we don’t want to hear those things. You can’t ever do that.

Many brethren and ministers alike want to run from the fight that is before them.

Do you ever feel that way? ...in what you’re going through right now? We’re in a fight. This is a great war we’re fighting, it truly is, and it’s stirred up and it’s going to stay stirred up out here until we’re through this. Going on...

This is usually manifested by “burying one’s head in the sand.” This naturally produces a sort of spiritual sterility. Unfaithful and controlling methods by the ministry have led to their own spiritual emasculation.

And it can lead to yours.

Instead of being zealous in serving God’s people, standing firm and boldly speaking the Word of God,

That’s what you still do and ever how you address God’s way of life and however you live it you do it boldly – truly. Going on...

...ministers are resorting to false ways that lead to spiritual stupor. The result is that they finally fall back [into a deep sleep – or] into the sleep from which they had been shaken...

Going on through the year we came up to December of 1998 and at the end of the year in that particular article here is a section toward the end of it is entitled...

INVITATION TO FAST

Something God's really blessed us with in the Church is a desire on a regular basis, even in an organized fashion, to fast and to fast often as God's people and the blessings associated with that when we understand what fasting is all about. But in this article here in December 1998 it says...

In writing this issue of *News Watch*, I have had a heavy heart, and I know that many brethren share those feelings when considering the condition of the Church. It is truly disheartening when you think about the majority of brethren who are no longer in fellowship.

And at this point in time we hadn't split apart in Toledo and Detroit area yet. Everyone was doing quite well at this point in time as far as regrouping, as far as coming back together again and getting stronger and becoming stronger in what God was giving us. Going on here...

Remembering those friends is sobering and painful, and is not lessened as we look at the condition of the rest of the Church. Something would be very wrong if we did not have such feelings, especially upon reading Ezekiel 9:4: [this is the verse] "*And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof*" (KJV)

That's the way we live our lives. We see what's happening in this world, we sigh and we cry inside because of what we see happening. But this was a time of talking about something that was actually happening within the environment of a scattered Church, of a sighing and crying of what was taking place, the heartache involved because you know what it means spiritually for them. Going on...

We should all be able to sigh and cry for what continues to happen to the Church. In hope there are many who share that same love and concern for the Church, brethren are being asked to accept an invitation to join together in a day of fasting for the scattered body. To allow time for study and preparation, the Sabbath of **January 30, 1999** has been set aside for brethren to humbly come together in fasting before our great God.

This is not a fast to ask corporate efforts to be blessed,

Because, see, what was happening in some of the bodies when they had fasts, it was to ask that God bless whatever corporate was doing. This one wasn't to ask that. In one case I think of an individual, an evangelist that was asking several times in a row that the Church be given the miracle of healing in the ministry so that people would know where God was working. You think... that's not the purpose of a fast. That's not what God says a fast is about, to ask for such things. Do you know what a fast is all about? I hope we all do. It's first and foremost to humble yourself before God and to repent, individually, before God. And when we do it in a unified way as a Church, it's so that we *all* seek individually first and foremost, but collectively as a body to do the same thing so that God can bless us more as a body – see? Because sin hurts the body. That's why I want to make another point really clear here that *God is cleaning the Body – even now!* Okay? We have lived through this; I have lived through this time after time after time after time and I'll just jump in the story here to a time of what happened in Toledo and Detroit.

We came to a point in time where people didn't leave a little bit here and a little bit there. God came in and cleaned – powerfully – in the Body...removed the debris all at one fell swoop and I was so thankful on a spiritual plane but I hurt so much on a spiritual plane too, knowing what people had chosen to do and the course they'd chosen to follow. But it's far better when people are not yielding to God that they leave. If they are dragging ideas into the Church of God, *if they're dragging things into the Church that aren't on the FAQ, if they aren't on the website, if I have not preached them, or some other minister out here has not preached them...* if it's something *different*: that person needs to stop and if they continue to do it they need to leave post haste and I will not hesitate in any fashion or form to ask them to leave. I have learned that through time. I don't like doing it but if I don't do my job... it reminds me of something I'd been reading about in the story of Elijah today. Part of the story goes on to talk about a situation where an individual was told by a prophet to do certain things and to kill certain individuals – one individual was allowed to go free – the prophet came back around later on and asked the individual that was supposed to do it and gave him a different scenario. Kind of like Nathan did with David. The point being is that the prophet said because you haven't done, in essence, your part in destroying whom God said should be destroyed – he said you're going to be destroyed by a lion today. And a little bit later the man was killed by a lion. God means what He says and God holds us accountable within the Church that we don't allow anything within the Body: not in our own lives – we've got to fight so that we don't allow sin into the Body. If you allow sin into your life you weaken the Body of Christ, you weaken the Church of God, you hurt it, you hurt your fellowship within the Body and you've got to fight those things and repent of those things and continue to fight day by day by day so that you can be strong and become stronger. But sometimes people let down in their own lives and they begin to forget how God works. And I candidly have come to a point in time where I don't like the decision and choices people make if it's against the truth, if it's against the Church, but I do not hesitate one iota to tell them – you're disfellowshipped. You're hurting the Body. You're hurting the Church of God. You're hurting the work of God: because of that very reason.

There's a parable that goes back in Matthew that some have not understood. A woman who didn't understand that when it says 'if your right arm offends you cut it off': distorted, perverted mind – she tried to cut off her arm, someone who was associated with the Church one time – associated with it because she definitely wasn't in it. Sometimes people take things like that and they read something into it and she didn't understand what it meant by any measure or form. To think God would be so perverted to tell someone to pluck out their eyeball? ...cut off their arm? That's not what He's talking about! It's not what He's telling them to do! It's about the Body, it's about the Church, and God makes it very clear that it's far better that a part be cut off than the whole body should be cast into a lake of fire, because in other places in the Bible it makes it very clear... you know what leaven does? It speedily goes through the Body. Leaven spreads so fast, it truly does. That's why Paul fought the battles he did from time to time. Some people think and might feel, that's hard. It's not hard, it's God's love and people don't understand God's love sometimes; His love for the Body, His love for the Church and if anybody doesn't want to be a part of that God makes it very clear: bye-bye, sayonara, dasvidaniya, auf weidersehen, whatever other words are out there: Good-Bye!

We are to have absolute unity and oneness of spirit in the Body of Christ. If you're not in unity and oneness with doctrine, with truth, you are on dangerous spiritual ground. You do not have the *right* to question what is true. You should have proved it to yourself whenever it came out: 50th Truth as an example; you have the right and the responsibility to prove it to yourself, but if you disagree then it's an easy choice. You have to make a choice and be right and honest with God and say, "Well, the truth isn't here any longer, it's not with God. This isn't God's Church. I'm going to go where God is." And so you

have to make a choice of where you think God is – right? We all understand what I’m saying? Because I thought if I hadn’t explained that well enough I’ll go back and I’ll break it down.

So again here, we go through many things like that to prove things to our self, but once it’s been proven, and once you know it’s true... or if you haven’t proven it to yourself and you haven’t come into unity and harmony, then be true to yourself. If you really believe that something isn’t there and that it’s not right... Man, you have a responsibility before *God* to answer that! Either its God’s Church or it isn’t. Either we’re re-established as God’s Church or we’re not and ... there we go. See, a lot of you don’t know what I’m talking about right now. I’m talking about a cleansing that God’s doing within the Church of God *now*. We go through different waves where God gives us a certain amount of time for us to respond to change and to grow and if we haven’t done that – we’re gone. He will bring it to the surface; He will bring it out to where either we repent or we will go and some of that is starting within the body again. I’m just trying to admonish, trying to forewarn so that you understand *how God works*. I speak this by experience. I’ve seen it over and over and over again in God’s Church and I’ve seen a new wave begin. I hope it’s few but I’ve been dumbfounded before. I am speaking very plainly to everyone here.

I hope and pray that everyone, and I feel as a whole that everyone is, but those who are newer are going to have the greatest trials, the hardest time because you’re new, because you’re babes and you have a greater battle in a lot of those things to keep fighting; to not allow doubt and confusion or sin to get in the way. You’ve really got to fight. I’ve made that comment on this so often. You’ve got to fight for this way of life with all of your being. Not to the point where you’re afraid, or fearful... God’ll bring you through it. If that’s your heart and your desire you just simply pray before God and He’ll bring you through. He’ll give you what you lack. He’ll give you what you need if that heart is right before God. But if there’s something you’re holding onto, if there’s something you won’t give up, if there’s something you won’t address, if there’s something you’re not in agreement with, if there’s something you think should be done in a different way – then you’re on dangerous ground. And I’m just making it real clear we’re going through a phase right now where you won’t be around much longer because God gives time, but there are times when judgement comes and we’re in a time, a little phase of judgement here where if we’re not responding we’re going to be going and I don’t want to see that happen, but I’ve already seen it start – okay? Don’t let it happen to you. I know where I’m going. I know what I’m doing. I know what she is doing. I know where she is going and all the rest of you – I don’t know. Only you can know before God. Does that make sense? Understand what I’m saying? It’s a conviction of your own before your God – truly. Going on...

And so it was an invitation to fast. We have another invitation to fast coming up here – not for 2 days this time – just one day in February; right at the end of the first 140; right at the end of the first ‘half a time’ because there are seven ‘half a times’ coming and so it just happened to be a good time at the ‘half a time’ to have a fast... to petition God. There are exciting things coming. As we go forward here, you are going to live through one of the most dumbfounding years of your life, you truly are... you have no idea. Every year I’ve been in God’s Church – dumbfounding years one after the other... where they’ve headed, where they’ve continued to go... I look back now as we go through our history and talk about our journey of faith and I am in awe; I am dumbfounded about the power and the might of Almighty God to mould and fashion us into what we can become. God’s the one who does it. It’s a marvellous thing. He moulds and fashions the universe and the galaxies that are out there and He takes far greater care and concern for us and what He moulds and fashions into our life and how He does it. A master potter in ways that we don’t really fully grasp yet and the more you grow, the longer you’re in God’s Church, the more you’ll come to appreciate that truth, the more you’ll be in *awe* of what God has done in your life and what He’s doing in your life: every facet, everything about you, the character, the

mind that *He* is moulding and fashioning – because He does it. He does it! And the choice is just to yield yourself to the process and fight the fight! It's a beautiful thing. So going on back here about this fast...

This is not a fast to ask corporate efforts to be blessed, but to ask God to forgive our sins which have brought such destruction upon us. Our sins have separated us from the favour and blessing of our Father.

The parable of the 10 virgins should ring in our ears. All 10 were either nodding off or already fast asleep. No one did as they were charged. All had failed to keep watch. They were not ready! As Matthew 24:45 shows, we are to be *faithful* and wise servants.

Faithful! There was a time in God's Church when people would read about the 10 virgins and would think along the lines of two groups – the wise and the foolish. 5 were wise and 5 were foolish and basically the whole Church felt like...most people do, "I'm one of the wise." And they took solace in that, like there are some out here that are just being flat foolish and it came to a point in time where it was like the Laodicean group – they're going to be the 5 foolish and the wise will be the Philadelphians. Not understanding the purpose of the parable. The purpose of the parable was to show that *all 10 failed to do what they were supposed to do!* Those who *THOUGHT* they were right with God and those who were just totally foolish in their approach and their worship toward God and God called them all to repentance. And the whole purpose of the parable is to show that they were not all *faithful*. We're to be *faithful* and wise. We're to be on guard. We're to be alert. We're to be spiritually watchful in our lives and that's what you have to call out to God for to help you to do that, to fight that battle.

We must be *faithful* to the charge God gave each of us when we were invited to the marriage of the Lamb. We are to be making ourselves ready, but we have slumbered and slept. From time to time we have been jolted awake, but much of the Church is now falling into deeper sleep than ever. Jolts and chastening do not seem to be awakening brethren any longer. The Church needs deliverance. God has promised there will be a faithful remnant,

So He began to show us there's going to be a remnant through all this. We just didn't grasp this is where He's doing it all – amazing!

...but has made it clear it will be a people who humble themselves and repent of their sins. Can we recognize and admit our sins and our guilt?

Please invite others to join in this fast. We need each other more than ever!

The Temple of God needs cleansing! We must focus on getting our lives right with God.

And that applies to the fast we're coming up to. The Temple of God still needs cleansing; we still need purifying... our lives still need cleansing. MY life is still going through a cleansing process and I need to grow more. I want to grow more! I need to overcome more! That process never ends; it's a constant fight as long as you're in this human body.

Let's beseech Him in repentance and humility and ask Him to reveal His will to us more clearly. Our sins, individual and collective, are hindering clear vision.

Incredible, again, things we have to go through so often.

Here is another articles...

YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD SUCH A STORY!

Talking about Joel and what was said there. I'm going to take time for this because this is starting into January of 1999 now. Some interesting things sometimes of what God gives us at different stages and what God began to give at this point in time as far as I was concerned, as far as me. In this particular section here, addressing what was happening in some of the Church organisations and giving some examples of what was happening in some of them. Breaking into context here...

This is another perfect example of being stuck in the physical.

There are so many that didn't have spiritual perception and insight and were taking things physically, were stuck in things in the past. It was like some were trying to recapture what Mr. Armstrong had done, wanting to go back or in some cases they didn't want to do that, but they wanted to copy some of that and yet not continue forward, not grow from there. Some of this was being addressed and it goes on to say...

Some know an Ezekiel message must go out to physical Israel but have overlooked what comes first.

And so there was this desire of some groups to go out here and one particular group that got into big trouble financially because they wanted to stay on one particular station in Chicago and the Church split over that because of the disagreement in whether or not that should be kept and all that money should be kept going in there, or whatever, so the second largest organization split into a couple. Then the biggest organization one was having battles about wanting to do certain things and how to go about it and so forth. So this is what this is about...an Ezekiel message, warning. It says...

...but [they] have overlooked what comes first. God has a warning message that is to first be given to spiritual Israel, the Church of God.

And that's what people were missing. It's about the Church. God's first and foremost – it's always about us.

Are God's tithes and offerings being used to serve the house of the Lord?

And then encouraging people to read the verses just quoted in Joel... going on...

It is time to wake up and address the reality that is so evident all around us. The gospel is no longer going out to this world in the magnitude it once did.

People were willing and wanting to copy some of that and build up the Church and have the ability to go out to the world again, to have a magazine be as great as 'the Plain Truth' was or television telecasts and radio broadcasts – to be as great as it used to be, and nobody came close to achieving an infinitesimal amount of any of that! Because God isn't blessing that. Didn't bless it back then. Going on...

If God wants it to go out in as strong a way as it did under Herbert W. Armstrong then He will do it. But He isn't, if you truly believe He is in control of His Church.

People can learn so much if you just look at what is happening, where God is, where God isn't – all those things should be answered. Going on...

When the warning message of Ezekiel goes out to Israel, the beginning of her punishment will have already begun.

Interesting.

The large organizations will no longer be functioning as they are today. On the contrary, even now they are nearing their end.

Now, people can mock and make fun of that – 1999 – “HA! They’re nearing their end?!” A lot truer today than it was then. How near is near? 10 years? 11 years? Is that not near? Amazing how human beings are sometimes... how *haughty* human beings are. Some who like to poke fun at and make fun of some of what is said in one area of the Thunders about certain leaders of the church. It’s coming, it is coming. God’s time; according to God’s will.

So some make fun of those things and they don’t understand what they mock, what they make fun of. Going on...

What are you going to do when they fold? Sad to say, if you wait time may run out. Do you think God expects you to act before such events occur? How much time do you think you have left to decide? Will an economic crash be the final blow to organizational structures?
“Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God” (Joel 1:13, NKJ).

It’s prophecy of what comes to pass at the end. God makes it very clear He’s going to take it all away – everything that gives them support so they can’t be any longer: says it over and over again in many different ways. Amazing! This work isn’t going to stop. What we’re doing is not going to end. It’s going to become more powerful in God’s time. I’ve known for a long, long, long time that when the time comes we won’t have to pay for anything out there to continue to grow...it’s going to be there – God will see to it. Amazing!

Under a section called...

REPENT AND FAST

“Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, [Eternal your God] and cry out to the LORD. Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?” (Joel 1:14-16, NKJ).

That’s things we’ve lived through, obviously...

How many do you believe will really embrace God’s warnings and repent? How many do you think would really believe what is written in this *News Watch*? Probably very few! Just how deep is our apathy and blindness? For those who believe these things to be true, **January 30** has been set aside the purpose of fasting, prayer and deep repentance before our God. We must focus on our own need for God’s forgiveness and mercy.

And that never ends: our need for God’s mercy and forgiveness of our sins.

As we draw closer to God, our prayers for others will become more helpful. Please refer to the “Invitation to Fast” in last month’s *News Watch*.

Going on...

Where is your heart? Is it with an organization or with God’s scattered people?

We understand that God works with an organization to do what He’s going to do and my heart is still to this day in a very powerful way looking forward to God’s scattered people being brought back. I look forward to times in the Great White Throne when some of my relatives, different ones that I know of are going to be resurrected, but I know that’s coming for all the world. But I *really*, I *deeply* look forward to the times tens of thousands and several hundred ministers I know are resurrected and awakened from a spiritual sleep. Not just from being dead, not just to be given a new body, but when their minds are awakened as everyone of us have had to go through who were baptized before December 1994. I *deeply look forward to that* and I *deeply* look forward to the 5th Trumpet and that period of time when there will be several hundred, a few thousand who are going to be drawn back and I know there are going to be some in that midst of people that I know. I don’t know who they are yet, but I cannot tell you what that means to me. To know the ones that are going to be coming... just the numbers, I know there’ll be some that I know, they’ll be some that you know for those of you who were around back then.

If we love each other brethren, if we understand God, if we understand God’s calling as we talked about earlier; how can you help but love those whom God has called and given His spirit to? There is never an excuse for not getting along with someone else in God’s Church. There is never an excuse for angry words, for hard words – never.... never an excuse in God’s Church for any kind of divisiveness among people. I’ve cried out strong in that over the last few years, I truly have...waiting for people to change, desiring for people to change in situations and circumstances I knew there was conflict between people and I’m so thankful, especially for those that have been around for a long time who have made great changes in so many of those things in their life – see? But some of those things still exist and it hurts. So any of you, if you ever come to a point in time where you have a wrong feeling toward someone else in the body, understand the need to repent of that so quickly because you are a murderer. That’s what God says. We just read that last Sabbath. God calls you a murderer when you do that. To hate, but we don’t call it hate... *don’t call it murder...?!* If you fail to love a brother, a sister when you have the ability to do so by the power of God in your life, the ability to repent, the ability to think right toward them through the power of God’s spirit in your life – and if we fail to love, God says what we are: *we are a murderer!* Because that sin is *heinous* in the Church of God! It’s *perverted* in the Church of God! ...and it cuts us off from the flow of God’s spirit. Don’t ever deceive yourself – see? Don’t ever deceive yourself in thinking it doesn’t.

So again...

Where is your heart? [...asking if it’s with the organisation] Please enter this fast only if you see your need for God’s mercy...

Awesome things that God has said that are going to take place through time here and what would happen to the Church and things that we experienced within the Church and the importance of consecrating a fast as He talked about and so forth.

So with that I want to jump ahead in time...

THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

How many of you saw that movie? I get so frustrated sometimes in the scattered church out here and seeing what different people were doing and different ones that invite different ones in to speak at a certain area or whatever and this one here hit me because we were beginning to, at that time... I don't know how you describe it – *great desire* within the scattered body out there to see people come together again and some would go to all kinds of means to try to get back what we used to have – a fellowship in large groups, you know?! And so in that great desire some would go to extremes to the point of compromise and they would invite various ones with different ideas.

I don't remember what years they were here now, I'd have to go back and look and that'd be a tough job but I think of one time being invited up to Minneapolis, Minnesota and there was a group of about 100 up there at the time. They paid my way to go up there to talk to them because they liked some of the things they were reading and some of the tapes they'd been getting and so some of these groups were kind of reaching out there. It's like what we read earlier about if you're not being fed what do you do? You start searching out here and sometimes you're getting in a garbage can and you don't even know it. And that's what some were doing.

And in this particular case they brought me up there and I went and preached to them and I talked to them about some of this thing about building bridges – that you can't do it. Talked about 14/15th Passover and said, you can't do it – it's wrong, and some of you believe it. Some of these ideas you have about Pentecost...you can't have different ideas about Pentecost. There's one truth about Pentecost. There's one truth about the 14th Passover – this is what it is. I didn't get invited back.

I did the same thing in Phoenix, Arizona – same sort of group. Some of them were made up of peoples in United, Global, Living, whatever it was at that point, I think it was still Living and Global. Some were still in Worldwide. Some had left everything, but they would invite all kinds of people out in different areas and they'd get a group together because people were wanting something and they were willing to step outside the bounds of what Living was allowing, or Global at that time was allowing or what United was really wanting. They didn't want those kinds of things to take place, they didn't like that kind of thing. But anyway I went down there and talked to them. Told them the same thing – building bridges – can't do it. You can't invite someone in that has a different belief, they don't mix. Passover, Pentecost – gave a lot of different examples; didn't get invited back. So we had this one here...

THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

You try to build bridges you might as well bring dynamite along and just blow the thing up because it's not going to work. Anyway, a frustrating time to go through in God's Church – seeing what was happening, seeing how people were being divisive and how they were going off course. And yet there were people who were hungry. They didn't understand; they didn't like the truth when they heard it. Sad, so weak.

Finally after one whole year we come up to the time of Pentecost again. Awesome! Because just before God established us as a Church again, we had to go through the subject of Passover and now...

COUNTING PENTECOST

Amazing...God started us on Pentecost, re-established us on Pentecost, and now, before Pentecost came around again, the subject of how Pentecost is counted had to be addressed because of what was happening out there in the scattered body and what was beginning to be taught by some out here. There was an individual with 'the Church of the Great God' who began to have some contact with us and we began to have some contact with them until I found out some of their teaching and what he was teaching about Pentecost...that every few years he counted the wave sheaf in an improper way and because of that counted Pentecost outside of from the time that he should have from the Days of Unleavened Bread. And yet he had all this reasoning that he wrote up in an article that I read. I about went nuts reading it I was so frustrated!

Again, this thing of building bridges and ideas and a minister we'd began to work with in Missouri, invited him in to speak. Told him you can't do that! You can't have people come in like that and teach things. He said, "Well why don't you come down and explain this to him because I can't explain this to him the way you can." I had no interest in explaining to someone who had no interest in learning.

COUNTING PENTECOST

Because of what was being taught out there, other groups as well, different ideas that people had about Pentecost, God gave us the ability to perceive and see things in a deeper way than we'd ever understood them in the Church: same as with Passover. Amazing! I didn't do it, but God gave it here, gave understanding of some things that I was never able to understand before, couldn't see. Incredible!

Then we came up to August/September – finally, just jumping ahead here...

TRUE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD – Pt. 1 [and] Pt. 2

And talking about how you're able to have right fellowship with God – something that we need to understand deeply; and a right fellowship with one another, and again things about the scattered Church. We came up to December 1999 with an article entitled...

THE END?

And it was at that time there that we got invited over by someone sitting here today, Steve and Patti Dalrymple, who I don't think he'd mind me telling. He was working over in Belgium and they had invited us over. We had been good friends since the time we'd been down in Cincinnati and although we were on a little bit of a different path at the time, he hadn't been at the point yet where he'd been fully shaken and awakened yet by God, and he invited us over. He was going to use his airline miles that he'd gathered to invite us over there to visit with them. I would not have spent money in the Church of God to go to Europe, yet we had some people over there interested in talking to us. But I, at that time, would not, I couldn't do that conscientiously at that point; I wasn't there yet to see what God was doing. I wouldn't have had that kind of expenditure to put into that to go over there to do that. I didn't see it yet, what God was doing. So he invited us over and we talked afterwards about, "Why did we accept?" And they were asking, "Why did we invite them?" ☺ But God was doing something here and blessing us because of a friendship that existed there and, anyway, we went and visited with some people in Belgium that had interest and that were receiving the tapes and then we went to London as well and sad to say, visited with the very family that's now not with us, that I had to announce about today. They

invited us to their place – they had 19 people there, one of them was another elder that’s in England right now – Philip – and he was there at that bible-study and slowly but surely God began to help me to understand what He was doing over there – that there were people over there that He was working with and this happened right at this time of year. It was during November that some of this began to happen.

It was also at this time that we invited that minister down in Missouri to come up to Toledo to be there during Thanksgiving while we were away and while we were away the mice did play... because they started hatching up division while we were gone, while we were in Europe, and they began to spread things around a little bit here and there and they began to talk amongst themselves about what I was doing and that I was their minister and I should be there and I shouldn’t be anyplace else, and I shouldn’t go anyplace else –because he’s *our* minister and he should basically do what we tell him to do. You know?! Little did they know what God was doing.

It’s incredible how things happen and the timeliness of some of these things and it is exciting to look back and to realize how God works with us, leads, guides, directs us, moulds us and fashions us. We’ll continue on next Sabbath with this.

~~~end