

This letter is addressed to those brethren who joined COGWA, or who are considering it, because it is “new” and they *hope* it is a fit “haven” for those who still believe in *all the doctrine Mr. Armstrong established in the Church*—at least insofar as they still remember and understand the many aspects of that doctrine. Most such brethren find COGWA’s doctrine, even after two years of existence, rather mysterious.

While the following discussion focuses on COGWA, the spiritual conclusions are equally applicable to brethren who stay with Living (Meredith) or the other splinter organizations by blinding themselves in wishful thinking, or rationalizing that they personally reject the apostasy/iniquity of the organization they attend.

Precisely because we respect the faithfulness of you brethren who believe all you know of Mr. Armstrong’s doctrine, and yet tentatively place hope in COGWA, we exhort you to also *remember and follow* Mr. Armstrong’s doctrine that faithful Christians are *forbidden* by God to *congregate* with a group whose *top leadership* rejects *even one* of Mr. Armstrong’s apostolic teachings. He pronounced that Christians who congregate with such apostate leaders “share in their sin” in God’s sight, under the principle of II John 10-11 and other scriptures. Please review the scriptures and our discussion in the “God’s People at Home” section of our foundational letter here on our website.

Candidly, only one who *refuses to look* could attend COGWA a few months and not at least sense that it rejects several of Mr. Armstrong’s doctrines—even though the leaders and most ministers try to avoid publicly speaking or writing of this. They want to win every member they can; therefore, they discreetly approve members who reject various teachings of Mr. Armstrong, and they try not to offend members who believe all his teachings. In truth, the majority of COGWA members know or surmise that their leading ministers, without a single exception, reject various doctrines of Mr. Armstrong, and *many of these members would leave COGWA if it did not reject those doctrines*.

COGWA’s doctrine is actually more liberal overall than Garner Ted’s was in the 1970s: it embraces the main components of Ted’s apostasy and adds further apostasy he even found *too liberal*. United correctly points out that now, after COGWA’s emergence from its pretentious “organizational” phase, its doctrine is the *same* as United’s. Top ministers of COGWA have assured a number of members who *favor United’s apostate doctrine that it is COGWA’s doctrine as well*. On the other hand, thousands of brethren refuse to join COGWA because, among other good reasons, they infer that its doctrine is substantively the same as United’s. Many of these brethren are people who believe *just as you do* regarding Mr. Armstrong’s doctrine. Such brethren do not all reach identical conclusions about where they *should* keep God’s Holy Convocations under present circumstances, but they all consider COGWA *utterly unthinkable*.

To just give the most conspicuous example of COGWA’s apostate doctrine, it is hard to imagine how anyone could miss the fact that the organization flagrantly and somewhat disdainfully rejects Mr. Armstrong’s Church government doctrine by *voting* for leaders and placing ultimate governing authority in a *committee* rather than a *single man*: Jim Franks can be removed or overruled on major issues by committee vote.

Mr. Armstrong expressly and repeatedly pronounced such Church government “*Satanic*”; he also taught that his government doctrine was the *cornerstone* Truth Christ had restored to the Philadelphia Church era through him. (Some of the ’70s liberals advocated for Church government exactly like what COGWA embraces.) One of Mr. Armstrong’s most urgent final directives to Church leaders in anticipation of his death was to *never turn to such government*, even if the man who succeeded him went very wrong; if leaders turned to such government, he gravely warned, they individually would be *cut off from Christ*, and Philadelphia Christians would reject their rule.

As desired by many of its members, COGWA also fundamentally rejects Mr. Armstrong’s doctrine on all the following subjects, among others: exclusive *apostolic* authority to *establish* or *change* Church doctrine; Mr. Armstrong’s commission as the end time Elijah; the priority of the First Commission work and the content of the Gospel; the *undivided* body of Christ in government, doctrine and work; the prohibition of makeup use as *spiritual* sin leading to the *Lake of Fire*; the *promise* of healing in Christ’s body broken for us, and the understanding that the promise is effectively *rejected* by use of most types of *medical* treatment; *disfellowshipping* members for marrying outside the Church or interracially; the stringent divorce and remarriage criteria; Church attendance requirements; the spiritual *definition* of tithing—mandating *gross* tithing in the U.S. (and most other countries); birthday celebration. (Meredith’s apostasy is identical or similar on all these doctrines.) Again, Mr. Armstrong warned repeatedly that any minister who taught contrary to even *one* of these and other doctrines would be *cut off by Christ from the Church*, and that no faithful Christian could congregate with or under such a minister.

Thus, by the pronouncement of God’s end time apostle, *the ministers you congregate with and under at COGWA (as well as Living and the other splinter organizations) are all cut off from Christ* for their apostasy regarding each of the above doctrines, as well as other doctrines (some organizations embrace a significantly different assortment of apostate doctrines and false prophecy). Under numerous scriptures and Mr. Armstrong’s pronouncements, these splinter ministers’ *rebellion* against the end time apostle’s doctrinal authority is *not atoned for at all* by their *speaking* respectfully of and with praise for Mr. Armstrong. Consider I Samuel 15:22-23, Luke 6:46, and Matthew 21:28-31. Therefore, these ministers have *no authority to hold, or officiate in, the Holy Convocation*. The brethren with them, then, are simply “kidding themselves,” as Mr. Armstrong used to say, in thinking they are “assembling” in a place where God is on the Sabbaths.

We further exhort you to *gravely* consider what this means for the most solemn and sacred of all God’s observances: the Passover. In addition to having no authority before God to hold the Passover observance, COGWA’s ministry also have altered important aspects of Mr. Armstrong’s doctrine regarding the body and blood of Christ—just as they did in United, having received this doctrinal perversion originally from the Tkaches. (Again, Meredith’s doctrine is very similar.) Remember the *life-and-death warning* of I Corinthians 11:27-31.

*Take this warning*, we implore you, not to keep God’s Sabbaths and Passover in an “*unworthy manner*” under God’s law—in a service *Christ shuns*.

Many brethren today attend services in COGWA or one of the other organizations while *knowing* the organization is led by men whose *spiritual record belies* the Church office they claim to hold; this includes teaching apostate doctrine and false prophecy on various subjects. Most such brethren argue that Hebrews 10:24-25 *commands* Christians to attend services *somewhere*—rather than keep the Sabbaths “at home”—if *any* service is within their reach. They tell themselves that this supposed mandate to assemble at all costs is an absolute requirement of the Fourth Commandment.

From this premise they reason that God expects them to attend Sabbath/Passover services even if they can find no group which has not embraced at least *some* apostate/false doctrine. In their interpretation, which they typically believe is supported by Mr. Armstrong’s teaching, God simply expects them to discern which group is *least corrupted* by false doctrine and attend it if physically possible; they recognize that God also requires them to personally reject the false doctrine of the group they attend, but they typically believe they may do this largely in secret so as not to be disfellowshipped and left with “nowhere” to attend except an even more corrupted group.

Here and in our other writings we have detailed how the Bible fundamentally contradicts the spiritual rationalization just described. Mr. Armstrong contradicted it most prominently by the inescapable conclusion of his doctrine regarding biblically-commanded shunning of apostate ministers and their *automatic loss of ordination* in God’s sight. Still, most brethren who rationalize as just described are shocked to hear, either because they never understood or they later forgot, that Mr. Armstrong expressly and specifically pronounced their belief to be one of the most important doctrines of *Satan’s counterfeit Christianity*. If that statement shocks you, consider this quote from Mr. Armstrong: “One of [counterfeit Christianity’s] basic beliefs and practices is that it is necessary to your salvation to ATTEND CHURCH” (this and the following quotes are drawn from the lead article of the May 1960 *Good News*; emphasis his in all quotes).

Elaborating on this point, he declared to *true Christians*: “You have been told by *the world* ‘ATTEND CHURCH’ so many times you have come to *assume*, without thinking, that this is the teaching of your Bible.” He went on to pronounce that Hebrews 10:24-25 “is not a direct command that you *must* assemble together with others in the church.” God’s Sabbath command, Mr. Armstrong explained, incorporates the fact that He expected various faithful Christians in various eras to *keep the Sabbaths at home*, because no *completely doctrinally faithful* congregation would be available to them: “Brethren, [Scripture] narrows fellowship—assembling together for worship—down to ONLY those who are in [all] God’s TRUTH—the true LIGHT—and who OBEY it.” “We are barred from fellowship or worship with any others.” “We must have fellowship only with Jesus Christ, and those who are joined together in the TRUTH—all speaking the same TRUTH.”

For purposes of the critical point we make here, the following sentence from his article summarizes Mr. Armstrong’s doctrinal pronouncement on the subject: “If there is no [fully faithful] church in which to assemble, you are not *forsaking* the assembling together [by worshipping at home]”; in fact, he gravely warned, God *requires* you to keep the Sabbaths/Passover at home under such circumstances.

Thus, in this article and on many later occasions Mr. Armstrong unequivocally pronounced that attending services with a Sabbath-keeping group—even one which also recognizes many other major aspects of the Truth—is a scripturally *forbidden* course for God’s people who cannot attend a *true* congregation which recognizes *all* the Truth established in the Church through Christ’s end time apostle. God’s *command*, Mr. Armstrong declared, is that true Christians must keep the Holy Convocations *at home* in such circumstances: they must not attend Sardis services, GTA’s services, or any other group’s—even if that group rejects only *one* doctrine established through Mr. Armstrong, and even if the true Christian personally rejects the group’s apostate teaching.

In conclusion, just like all the other splinter groups, COGWA’s ministry in their apostasy hold *no authority* before God to conduct Church services—but *you* do, as brethren who still believe *all* the Truth restored through God’s apostle. You have such authority by the very written pronouncement and instructions of Mr. Armstrong, for isolated brethren who could not attend a God-appointed service conducted by a minister authorized by Christ.

Keep God’s Holy Convocations at home while you pray for and await the restoration of the Church under the government of Christ in *complete doctrinal faithfulness*. Meanwhile, make every effort to find other faithful brethren and discover where Christ is presently working to restore His Church: it is *certain* that Christ is working somewhere today. He expects us all to make every effort to send the message of the *full restored Truth* again to all God’s people entangled in apostasy, and to help the Church’s restoration come to pass without further delay. “I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden” (Zeph. 3:18—the word translated “sorrow” literally means “grieve”).

Your faithful home is a place where Christ will certainly come and officiate as your minister because of the “present distress”; the only “ordained Temple articles” you need in order to righteously keep the Holy Convocations are the Bible, Mr. Armstrong’s literature, his recorded sermons/Bible studies, a hymnal, and your prayers.

If you feel you need more advice about how to keep God’s Church services at home, or in regard to other important doctrinal/spiritual issues, we would be glad to help in any way we can.

Your brethren in Christ