

Should Christians **VOTE?**

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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Millions believe voting and participation in government are their civic and patriotic duties. This is the *democratic* way. But is it *God's Way*? Christ's gospel is about GOVERNMENT. If He were here today, would He vote? Would His servants participate in the politics of this world? Would they vote? Does His Church practice voting internally—to decide doctrine, spend money or select board members, ministers and leaders? Are God's leaders chosen by men's ballots? Here is the Bible teaching on voting and participation in politics made plain!

Jesus Christ brought a message about government. Like a broadcaster ahead of His time, everywhere He went, He preached—HE ANNOUNCED—the coming of the Kingdom of God. He explained that it would be a WORLD-RULING, DIVINE GOVERNMENT that would smash and replace all the governments of men.

But you have probably supposed that the governments of modern nations generally reflect God's Way. This is almost everyone's assumption. Yet, while God does, in fact, establish and remove nations—and leaders—this is not His world! This is why the Bible foretells the arrival of a SUPERGOVERNMENT to replace the confused, competing, inefficient and ineffective governments of men that are so powerless to solve *any* of the world's biggest problems.

How did the world come to be as it is? *Why* so much poverty, disease, hunger, pollution, ignorance and confusion? *Why* can the governments of men not get along, avoid war—and find peace and agreement? *Why* such constant instability, scandal and division among leaders everywhere? *Why* so much favoritism, antagonism between parties, ethics violations, political arm-twisting and lobbying, infighting, poor judgment, corruption, bribery, misrepresentation—and outright lying—in virtually all national governments? *Why* are there seemingly endless revolutions and military coups? *Why* no shortage of demagogues, dictators and revolutionaries, always promising to make things better, yet invariably bringing *worse* problems and conditions?

Look at the governments of this world. Generally speaking, there are three types today—*monarchies, dictatorships* and *democracies*.

Monarchies involve nobility—royalty—where bloodline is the key to succession of power. Through the death of a king or queen, a prince or princess ascends the throne. This cycle can last for generations or many centuries. History records that monarchies are almost always replaced, either violently or peacefully, with the king or queen often allowed to retain minimal power.

Dictatorships and totalitarian governments are usually created through violence—by coup or revolution. They are often short-lived, with something similar replacing them.

Democracies and republics are best described as collaborative, representative or parliamentarian, in that officials and leaders are elected, representing “the will of the people.” This involves a voting or balloting process in the selection of one candidate in preference to one or several others. This form is generally considered to be the *best* of mankind’s governments. Yet, the great 20th-century British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, called democracy “the *worst* form of government—*except [for] all the other[s]...*” This offers an amazing insight into how democracy really works, from an insider’s view.

But, as bad as democracy may be, it is true that it is far better than any other form of government—when that government lies *in the hands of men*. Democracy does at least attempt to ensure more individual “freedoms” than other kinds of humanly devised government.

In the end, however, none of man’s governments work either very well or for very long.

Consider. God is calling people who are citizens of many different nations on Earth, and most who learn the truth in this age are privileged to live under the freedoms of a democracy. Of course, many have previously participated in the election of their local, state, provincial or national leaders.

Yet this question arises: Should the new Christian continue to vote and participate in the politics of his country?

A Christian is one who follows—who *copies*—Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:21; Phil. 2:5). Again, what would Christ do if He were on Earth today? Would *HE* participate in the governments or politics of men? What does the Bible teach about voting to select leaders—either in national governments or in the selection of leaders in various denominations? And what about the Church that Jesus built?

Christ would not vote, because He understands the origin of the governments of this world and who is behind them.

Where did the governments of men come from? *How* did they originate? *Who* is behind them? *Why* is there so much strife and competition in the world today? Is this God’s world—reflecting His way, and His direction and guidance?

Most theologians, religionists and clergy blindly assume that it is. Therefore, they conclude that, as they usually put it, if “all Christians work

together, in love and unity, to make this world and its governments a safer and better place for everyone [or for democracy and freedom, as some emphasize] we can bring peace, happiness and prosperity to all.” Many *naively* believe that if they can “fix the world”—or even just improve it—they can usher in God’s Kingdom on Earth. Also, and even more naïve, is that many believe they can influence governments to become more godly.

This is fantasy—a completely wrong view, and it is *not* what God expects or wants.

Nowhere did Jesus say, “Go you into all the world and strive to make it a better place by becoming part of it.” Instead, He said, “Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15).

Christ did not come to fix or make *this* world better. He announced the COMING of a better world, made possible because of His government!

And the Bible also commands, “Come out from among them [the world], and *be you separate*” (II Cor. 6:17), and further, speaking of society’s Babylonish ways, “Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

World punishment lies just ahead for those who carelessly reject God’s plain Word.

This world is a condemned building. Built on a *wrong foundation* from the beginning, its weak underpinnings have eroded to the point of collapse under its own weight. It will soon be demolished, scraped away and replaced by a vastly *better* world and government—one infinitely better than the best parts of men’s governments *put together*!

Blind, deceived men think they can bring about the Kingdom of God through human effort. They see certain evil forces at work and feel compelled to “do something about it.” They assume that Jesus would be an “activist” striving to “make the world a better place.” Be honest! Haven’t you heard this many times? Haven’t you heard religious groups urge people to “get involved” or “take a stand”—or some similar thing—in order to improve national or world problems of one sort or another? (Read our booklet *What Is the Kingdom of God?* You may also read our book *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* to learn much more about the most important event that will ever occur on Earth. And to learn how God will intervene in world affairs, read *How God’s Kingdom God Will Come – The Untold Story!*)

Again we ask: Is this God’s world? Does HE want Christians to “make the world a better place”?

The Great Deceiver

The Bible speaks of Satan, “which deceives the *whole* world” (Rev. 12:9). Notice that it says, “the WHOLE world.” This is a staggering statement—but there it is in your Bible!

How is it possible that the devil can deceive over *seven billion* people? Does he work primarily through human agents—or does he influence the world in other ways? These are crucial questions.

This same verse concludes, “He was cast out into the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him.” Notice that it says, “*HIS* angels.” These fallen angels, subordinate to Satan, play their own role.

For now, let’s focus on one aspect of the enormous understanding within this passage.

If Satan has deceived the entire world, then how can it be God’s world? Since the *whole* world is deceived—and the apostle John also recorded that “the *whole* world lies in wickedness”—modern civilization cannot be of God. It is actually cut off from Him (Isa. 59:1-2). This will become clear.

The Life of a Democracy

It has been said that “eventually, all democracies commit suicide.” Since history bears this out, what is the average lifespan of a democratic society? How long will it typically last before forces within it topple or implode it? What are the limits beyond which it cannot survive? What forces threaten it?

The following quotes from well-known American patriots demonstrate the short-lived nature of democracies and why this is so. Wise King Solomon wrote that “Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). If a democracy has any chance to survive longer than normal, it will only be character found in its citizens that permits this. Consider these statements in light of the severe, fast-increasing moral decay that looms as the very greatest threat to the democratic nations of the West.

“A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising them the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over a [lousy] fiscal responsibility, always followed by a dictatorship. The average of the world’s great civilizations before they decline has been 200 years. These nations have progressed in this sequence: From (1) bondage to spiritual faith; from (2) spiritual faith to great courage; from (3) courage to liberty; from (4) liberty to abundance; from (5) abundance to selfishness; from (6) selfishness to complacency; from (7) complacency to apathy; from (8) apathy to dependency; from (9) dependency back again to bondage.”

— Alexander Tyler, in his 1770 book, *Cycle of Democracy*

George Washington referred to the United States as “a great experiment.” And in his farewell address he said, “Of all the dispositions and habits

Now, if you do not accept Revelation 12:9 as revealed knowledge from God, then any hope of personally breaking free of this deception will be lost!

If you do, think for a moment! If the devil practices deception throughout the world, it would certainly include influence upon, and control over, the humanly devised governments of all nations.

The “god of this world”

The Bible refers to the “god of this world”—and it is not the God of heaven. II Corinthians 4:4 records, “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the *light* of the glorious *gospel*...should shine unto them.”

which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

“Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks—no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without virtue in the people is a chimerical [an illusion or fabrication of the mind] idea.” And “Democracies have always been spectacles of turbulence and contention and as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”

— James Madison

“Only a *virtuous* people are capable of freedom.”

— Benjamin Franklin

“We have no government armed with powers capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice [greed], ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our constitution as a whale goes through a net.”

— John Adams

“Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis? A conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are a gift of God? That they are not violated but with his wrath?”

— Thomas Jefferson

“Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world.”

— Abraham Lincoln, March 15, 1865, letter to Thurlow Weed
one month before his assassination

There is only one being who wants to “blind” this world to the truth of the real gospel—Satan the devil. Understand. The true gospel is about the prophesied soon-coming Kingdom of God—God’s world-ruling government. Our booklet *Which Is the True Gospel?* explains how Christ is going to return and establish God’s Kingdom, thus replacing the devil. It is not strange then that Satan wants to block people from understanding this marvelous truth. He wants no “light” shining on it, knowing that it depicts a time when he will be banished from his current position of worldwide influence.

Three times in the gospel of John, Christ Himself refers to Satan the devil as “the prince of this world.” John 12:31, 16:11 and 14:30 make plain that in the future the “prince of this world” will be judged because, as Christ says in 14:30, the devil “has nothing in Me.” Take time to read these verses. John 12:31 parallels the judgment of this world with *Satan’s* coming judgment. This is because this is *his* world!

But let’s make this crystal clear.

Matthew 4 contains the well-known account of Christ’s confrontation with the devil after fasting for 40 days. The devil repeatedly *tempted* Christ through twisting scripture (one of his favorite devices). At one point, in verses 8 and 9, “the devil took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the *kingdoms of the world*, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” The devil departed.

This offer is more unusual than meets the eye! Why? Notice that Jesus rebuked Satan (verse 10), quoting Deuteronomy 6:13 in response, and answered, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.”

Yet notice! At no point did Christ say, “These kingdoms are *NOT* yours to give” or “Who do you think you are, trying to offer Me what is already God’s?” He said no such thing. Again, why? Because He knew that the governments—the kingdoms—of this world *ARE* the devil’s governments. Christ knew that they belonged to him—*WERE* Satan’s to give. Therefore, He rejected the TERMS for receiving these kingdoms from the one who *did* have authority to offer them.

Also understand this! This account describes what is called the *temptation* of Christ. Obviously what the devil offered was designed to *tempt* Him. If both Christ and Satan knew that the kingdoms of this world were *not* the devil’s to give, *then where was the temptation?* Surely, the devil would have known what Christ knew. Of course, Christ, who was *God* on Earth, would have known who had the power and authority to offer those kingdoms. The temptation would carry no weight—would be hollow—if men’s nations and governments were not the devil’s to offer—if they already belonged to Jesus.

So that there is absolutely no doubt that this is true, note the same account paralleled in Luke 4:6. The devil is speaking directly to Christ. Luke’s account adds a key phrase that should hit you like a sledgehammer. Satan said, “All this power will I give You, and the glory of them: for that [it] is delivered unto me;

and to whomsoever I will give it." Did you notice? It was completely within the scope of the devil's power and authority to offer or withhold the kingdoms of this world. They were *his* to give or not to give. God had "delivered" them to him—to his CONTROL!—and they are still his.

This world's nations and governments, with "all the glory of them," are still under the control of the "god of this world"—the "prince of this world"!

Have you ever heard this before? Yet, this is the plain truth from your Bible, and it has a direct bearing on why the world is filled with overwhelming problems. This world, with its ways and systems, led by the devil, has much to do with whether a true Christian votes in men's elections or seeks office in any of his governments. (Read our booklets *A World in Captivity* and *Did God Create Human Nature?* to learn more about the devil's role and influence.)

Satan's Kingdom Is Both Organized and Unified

Satan holds sway over all governments and nations. But is his own government, led by him and his demons, and ruling over human governments, unified? Is the devil himself divided? Allow Jesus to answer these questions.

Jesus and His disciples often had to cast out demons. I have done this on a number of occasions, and these can be very intense, dramatic encounters. They are not pleasant to witness, and those who do are often shocked by what they see. It becomes obvious that great power is present—both in the demon being cast out and in the greater power of God necessary to cast one out. Christ's accusers saw clear evidence that He was backed by *real power!* However, in Matthew 12:24-26, they accused Him of using the power of the devil to cast out demons.

Here is Christ's response: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and *every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:* and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" (vs. 25). Jesus was saying that Satan would never cast out demons—they are *his*! To do so would divide his own kingdom. The devil does have a kingdom. Since his kingdom *does* stand, it is clearly *not* divided! And it transcends the entire world.

Recall Revelation 12:9. It referred to Satan and "his" demons. This clearly means that they are *his*—they belong to him—he controls them.

Here is the point. Not only does Satan govern the kingdoms of this world, through his power and influence, but he also does it in an undivided, unified fashion with the aid of hundreds of millions (Rev. 5:11; 12:4) of demons.

Further, Ephesians 6:12 explains how Christians wrestle "against principalities, against powers, against the *rulers of the darkness of this world,* against *wicked spirits* [the proper translation] *in high places.*" It becomes obvious that these "*high places*" are within the governments or principalities of this world!

Now for an incredible account that illustrates and explains the terms "rulers" and "high places." An actual spirit war, lasting three weeks, is described

in Daniel 10! Michael, an archangel, fought with one called the “prince of the *kingdom of Persia*,” and referred to another upcoming battle with an arch-demon called the “prince of Grecia.” Archangels—or any angels—do not need 21 days to defeat puny, little, physical men. The “princes” that Michael was battling were powerful fallen spirits that ruled nations within Satan’s governmental structure.

This is not God’s world! It should now be evident that the devil governs a vast realm of fallen spirits. Together they deceive, confuse and exert far-reaching influence over all the governments and activities on Earth, including the many religions of men. Understand. These governments cannot be fixed or improved. They must be REmoved—by God!

Ten Biblical Proofs Christians Do Not Vote

The next section covers ten separate biblical proofs Christians do not vote. Each summarizes a principle from the Bible explaining why Christians never participate in the governments of this world—or in selection of leaders and doctrine within God’s true Church. Not only does a Christian not participate in the democratic politics of this world, but he would also *never* bring the world’s politics into God’s Church and attempt to stamp it with His authority. As you examine these points, consider why each has a clear application, both in the civil governments of men and in the denominations of Satan’s world. It will also become obvious *why* voting is never practiced within God’s Church.

Proof Number One

Proof ONE presents a central biblical understanding that few recognize. Consider these questions: Who is behind the selection of leaders over the many countries of Earth? Who actually chooses them? Ultimately, do *men* select presidents and prime ministers, who stand as the human leaders of nations today? We saw this is Satan’s world. But is this the whole picture? Does God play a role in *men’s affairs*?

Benjamin Franklin once said, “...the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that *God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?”

Was Franklin correct?

A little known, but remarkable, passage flies in the face of what every voter thinks upon casting his ballot. This is part of a remarkable story and partly explains why more talented people are leaving politics than ever before. It contains an amazing statement. Notice: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that *the most High rules in the kingdom of men*, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the *BASEST OF MEN*” (Dan. 4:17). The

word *base* means “the bottom, under.” If a house has a *basement*, it is located at the bottom or under the house.

This part of Daniel’s prophecy describes a king, Nebuchadnezzar, who may have been the greatest Gentile leader the world has seen—the “head of gold” of the giant image described in chapter 2. As a result of his important role in prophecy, leading the greatest empire on Earth nearly 2,600 years ago, Nebuchadnezzar became lifted up with pride. Notice his words in verse 30: “The king spoke, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that *I* have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of *MY* power, and for the honour of *MY* majesty?”

This worldly king was impressed with his *own* accomplishments and the grandeur of the spectacular ancient city (and kingdom) of Babylon over which he ruled. The account records that God humbled and punished him by giving him the mind of a wild beast for a period of seven years (vs. 32-33).

Nebuchadnezzar was an exception to the rule of Daniel 4:17—and there are a few such exceptions that God guides, for His own reasons. Think of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Winston Churchill. But He plainly states that He places “the basest of men” over the governments and nations on Earth. Also, Daniel 2:21 states, “[God] removes kings, and sets up kings.”

Now, typically, whom do *people* seek to put into office when they cast their ballot in an election? They try to ensure that the “best candidate” wins! No one votes for someone because they think that he is the “*worst* candidate.” However, if we are to believe Daniel 4:17, this puts them in direct opposition to God’s purpose—which is that the worst, or *basest*, man wins. The weakest, basest, lowliest people are often those whom God, for His own purpose, installs into office. This effect is why more qualified leaders often choose not to be part of a system primarily composed of this kind of people. Nebuchadnezzar shows that God makes a few exceptions—but this is *His* prerogative, not ours.

It is not God’s purpose that the “better” people win. God determines the winners in advance. In the end, the “will of the people” has no power or effect, because God is in charge of the outcome of elections.

Do not misunderstand, however. The governments of this world are not somehow doing God’s will simply because He selects their leaders. Many preachers completely miss the point, saying, “God is working in this election and good Christians everywhere, if we can get out the vote, can put godly men into office.” This literally puts them in a position of fighting God’s stated purpose. They do not understand *why* God says the basest people are elected. Just one reason is that God gives a world that rejects Him the leaders they deserve. Many religious leaders ignore this verse, believing it to be their job to work out God’s purpose. Their efforts actually attempt to override God’s true purpose.

God is working out a Master Plan that encompasses 7,000 years. He is allowing mankind to find out that its own ways, governments, religions, educational systems, values and purposes do not work. God has already picked

the leaders who best work toward the fulfillment of His great plan of salvation for all mankind.

Here is the point. You and I do not know whom God has already selected, in advance, as the “winner” that *He* wants in office. To cast a vote for someone other than the *pre-selected* winner is to *fight God’s purpose!* That is serious—and the Bible says that it is possible to “fight against God” (Acts 5:39)!

Further, if you are seeking to elect the *best* man, in an election where God has told you in advance that He is going to pick the “*basest*” person, you are directly *ignoring* His purpose and overriding it with your own. God has already picked the winner. Christians know they had better “get out of the way,” not “get out the vote”! God does not need our “help” installing who He has chosen. The “will of the people” has no power or effect, because God determines the outcome of elections.

Proof Number Two

Proof two involves a famous “conversation.” In John 18, Jesus was on trial before Pontius Pilate. In verse 33, Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You the King of the Jews?” The exchange continues until it climaxes in verse 36. Christ had determined not to resist whatever Pilate or the Jews had chosen as His fate. He answered Pilate’s question. Notice verse 36: “Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world*: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: *but now is My kingdom not from hence [here].*”

Do you understand Christ’s words? He said that His Kingdom (the New Testament term for government) is *not of this world*. Christians are part of THAT government—GOD’S government. They await the coming of *this* government to Earth. Also, just based on this verse (there are many others), Christ explains that God’s servants do not fight to defend His Kingdom. Grasp this. Since Christ’s servants do not even fight to defend Christ’s (God’s) Kingdom, they certainly, then, would never fight to defend any kingdom led by men in any supposed “just war”!

Remember that Christ’s Kingdom is not on Earth—it is from another place. It is not the job of His servants, through participation in men’s governments or through fighting in their wars—which the Bible plainly condemns, and in many passages—to supposedly spread the Kingdom of God. It has not yet arrived. Since God’s Kingdom comes from, and is headquartered in, heaven, His servants neither vote in, nor fight for, men’s nations or governments. Related to this, activist denominations, involved in and trying to influence this world’s governments are not backed by Jesus Christ. No amount of human reasoning can make it so. (Read our booklet *War; Killing and the Military*, a companion to this booklet.)

So, the second proof that Christians do not vote is because they are part of another Kingdom not of this world. In Matthew 6:9-10, Christ told them

to regularly pray, “Thy kingdom come,” because His followers serve and look toward *that* Kingdom, now just ahead. It comes only when Jesus returns.

Proof Number Three

Proof THREE builds on number one and actually strengthens that point. We will see this with the next several points, as they interrelate with proof two. First read Philippians 3:20, which states, “For our *conversation* [the Greek word here should be properly translated *citizenship*] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is a fascinating passage. It plainly states that a Christian’s “citizenship” is in heaven—not *on Earth*. Of course, all true Christians are also citizens of at least one country on Earth (some few have dual citizenship), but this is not their primary citizenship.

This verse explains *why* Christ said, “My kingdom is not OF this world.” It is from another place—HEAVEN! This verse complements John 18:36! Human leaders come from a certain city, state or province of the country that they represent. So does Christ. He comes from heaven.

The Greek word for citizenship is *politeuma*. POLITICS comes from this word! Christians *do* have a “political agenda,” but it is not of *this* world. *Politeuma* technically can also be translated another way. It can mean *a townsman*. It is correct to say that citizens of men’s governments are townsmen—of particular *towns* on Earth.

The word *police* comes from *politeuma*. So do *policy* and *poll*. It is not hard to understand how police, policies and polls are connected, in one way or another, to politics. Even the large cities of *Indianapolis* and *Minneapolis* derive their names from *politeuma*. They are large towns with lots of citizens. *Minnea*(polis) means the major city of Minnesota and *Indiana*(polis) means the major city of Indiana. Mystery is often stripped away when words are broken down into their most basic meaning. The root meaning of *politeuma* holds an important lesson for Christians regarding from where—and by whom—their politics are governed.

Do God’s people practice politics? YES—in a sense! Christians *do* have a “political agenda,” but not of *this* world or in any government within it. I will tell you that I have absolutely deep political convictions.

This said, is *God* political? The answer is absolutely YES! But His politics are not of *this* society—man’s civilization of nations and governments. He has His own view of government, His own view of politics. Of course, while not of *this* world, God *does* have a government.

Proof Number Four

Proof FOUR comes from II Corinthians 5:20: “Now then we are AMBASSADORS for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.”

I attended AMBASSADOR COLLEGE in Pasadena, California, from 1967-1971, to prepare and train for the ministry. This was one of three colleges started and sponsored by the Worldwide Church of God, under the leadership of Herbert W. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong saw II Corinthians 5:20 and decided upon this name, recognizing that it best reflected what Ambassador College students were intended to become.

Those who were accepted had to really know *why* they wanted to attend. And once they arrived, they were taught what it meant to be an Ambassador. I was told, during the time that I attended, that I was in training to hold this office, possibly on behalf of the Church. High standards were set so that high standards could be attained. Those standards touched upon all facets of student life: Studies, finances, health, appearance, work, athletics, clubs, dating and spiritual growth. All who did not strive to reach them simply did not remain an “Ambassador” at Ambassador College.

The Greek word for “ambassador”—*presbeuo*—is also interesting. While it means *ambassador*, the word *president* comes from it, as does *Presbyterian*. The most literal meaning of *presbeuo* is “representative.” In the United States, we have the House of Representatives—with 435 members. Together with the Senate’s 100 members, this forms the Congress of 535 elected *representatives* of the people. These elected officials answer to and, in fact, are supposed to represent the will of the people who sent them to Congress. All democratic governments, in which the people select their representatives, work similarly.

It is the same with Christians, who are ambassadors, or representatives, of Jesus Christ. In a sense, it could be said that I attended “*Representative College*,” because I was training to become His representative.

Consider why the leader of a country often carries the title of *President*. This is because he is the highest elected representative of the people.

The highest office in a country could just as easily carry the title of *Representative*. And the American House of Representatives could just as easily be called the *House of Presidents*. These words are interchangeable. A president is a representative and a representative is a president, but men have distinguished between them by picking two different words that mean exactly the same thing! Both come from *presbeuo*—and both mean *ambassadors*. Those who are ambassadors for Christ are ambassadors—or representatives—in a foreign land. This carries implications.

Any nation’s representative knows that, as ambassador to, for instance, Mexico, India or Lebanon, or any other country, he cannot participate in the politics of that country. He is a citizen of a different nation. He participates in the politics of *that* nation—the one he *represents*. He also cannot fight for the country to which he is *sent*. If he does either of these—under *any* circumstances—he loses his citizenship at home. In fact, he would be considered a traitor.

Of course, all ambassadors receive a certain “diplomatic immunity.” This legal term is understood and practiced all over the world. One reason the practice developed was because ambassadors could be arrested and tried on

Ambassadors for Another Government

The ultimate destiny of Christians is to become kings and priests, ruling with Christ in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 5:10). But every Christian has an important diplomatic job here and now. God's people represent a foreign government, because, as Paul declared, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20, NKJV).

Ambassadorships are critical appointments, only conferred on those who can properly represent the ideals, laws, people, culture, government policies and political ideologies and interests of the country where the ambassador holds citizenship. They must also possess good judgment. If an ambassador fails to uphold all these standards, he can disqualify himself from representing his country—and be recalled from his post!

As ambassadors for God's future government, Christians must exemplify *His* way—*His* "holy nation" (I Pet. 2:9). They are to represent the peace, order, love and abundant joy inherent in the spiritual government to which they owe their true allegiance. They are, in Christ's words, to be lights to the world (Matt. 5:14-16). And the "Father of lights" (Jms. 1:17) will not permit His children (Gal. 3:26) to hide their good examples "under a bushel."

In the truest sense, real Christians have been "set on a hill" for all to see, just as a light pierces the surrounding darkness so that people can see where to go.

Have you noticed that people have a way of immediately *categorizing* anyone they meet or any idea with which they come in contact? If you meet someone from the southern United States, you automatically fit the person into the image you have of the South, though you may have never been there. You may think of a Confederate flag, a steamboat, the Atlanta Falcons football team, hot, humid weather or "Southern hospitality." You assign the person to a certain "slot" in your mind.

If someone drives a Cadillac, it means a certain thing to most people. Driving a Volkswagen communicates a different image. Everybody knows businessmen dress a certain way. Doctors, police, bricklayers and athletes also connote different mental images. Just the way a person carries himself can convey that he is cocky, refined, shy, confident or relaxed.

Of course, people are categorized, many times incorrectly, according to their religion, skin color, political preference, manners, friends, sports they like, books they read, jokes they tell, entertainment they prefer or even the kind of dog they own. One's political preference also tells its own tale to observers.

Here is what this means to a Christian ambassador: People are analyzing *your* every word and action. Therefore, *you* must set an example that unmistakably identifies *what you are* and *who you represent!*

God intended that ancient Israel be a sterling example in obedience to Him, and that all the surrounding Gentile nations would not be able to help noticing how they too were intended by God to live (Deut. 4:4-8).

Tragically, the Bible shows that this never happened. Israel utterly failed their commission! In fact, they failed so miserably that, in the New Testament, Paul often referred to Israel's example to show Christ's followers how *NOT* to conduct themselves (I Cor. 10:6). How much better it would have been had Israel written a positive, righteous record for others to copy!

One bright spot in their history was King Solomon's early example of wisdom and understanding, which spread so widely that the Queen of Sheba could not believe it. She decided to check for herself (I Kings 10:1-10) and found that she quite literally "hadn't heard the half of it" (vs. 7). Solomon must have been setting a wonderful example. But, though he was king, he was still one man. What if the *entire nation* had been as wise and righteous as Solomon? It would have had that much greater impact on Israel's neighbors.

The early Church also had a difficult time learning to generate the right light. Paul must have had great patience as he dealt with the Corinthian congregation. Having much to say to them about their wrong conduct, he explained, "...we are *ambassadors for Christ*" (II Cor. 5:20). The reference was not to the ministry or apostles alone, though these are ambassadors in the most direct sense. He sought to emphasize to Corinth the importance of the examples we *all* set (vs. 10) and stated that, "...if *any* man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (vs. 17). All who are "new creatures" have received an ambassadorial appointment—a very high office, carrying enormous responsibility in representing God's government.

Paul instructed the Philippians to "Only let your conversation [Greek: "conduct"] be as it *becomes* the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). That gospel is of the coming government of God. Is *your* conduct "becoming" of that government, or do you cast a bad light on it? Are you an "un-becoming" representative?

In Mr. Armstrong's later years, during the period when he traveled abroad regularly meeting with world leaders, he referred to himself as "an Ambassador without portfolio." He always strove to conduct himself as such, fully recognizing that he represented a "foreign" government. He understood there was no escaping that leaders and

others would evaluate the Worldwide Church of God by the message and conduct of its *representative*—Herbert W. Armstrong!

Notice Paul's instruction to the Colossians: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man" (4:5-6).

People outside the Church should not be able to miss your wisdom. Like Solomon's, though to a lesser degree, it should stand out as unusual. Remember, God has chosen "the *foolish* things of the world" to "confound the wise" (I Cor. 1:26-31). Christians must grow in wisdom, discretion, tact and diplomacy, in order to retain their "credentials" as ambassadors.

I Corinthians 6:2 shows that the saints will one day judge the world. If that day were here, and all those who knew you in *this life* could see you as a member of the ruling God Family, what would their reaction be? Would they, by remembering your outstanding example—in your home, family, neighborhood or job, find it easy to accept? Or would they collapse in shock that you could have made it into God's Kingdom?

Would they remember hearing you and your mate fighting? Would they recall the disrespect, foul language and unkempt appearance of you or your children? Would an image come back to mind of an uncared-for yard or off-color jokes? Would they remember your unfriendly, secretive manner, your unpainted house, your poor work record—and on and on?

Christ gained "favor with God *and man*" (Luke 2:52). In this way, He set an example for His followers (I Pet. 2:21). Are *you* in "favor" with both God and people? A man or woman can be used by God to convert his or her mate purely by conduct (I Pet. 3:1), without ("the") Word, the Bible. Take time to read this passage.

People should notice that, as a direct result of your beliefs, your conduct is *different* from the average person (I Pet. 4:4). Does *your* example convict them? It has been said that you may be the only Bible some people ever read. Can people "read" you clearly? Do you even "abstain from all *appearance* of evil" (I Thes. 5:22)?

No error or fault could be found in the prophet Daniel (6:4). His conduct was so outstanding, in all respects, that a group of cunning, carnal-minded politicians could find *nothing* of which to accuse him—unless it was "concerning the law of his God" (vs. 5). Think! He was not doing a *single thing* that they could attack—*nothing*!

This is what it means to be the light of the world. *This* is what it means to be an ambassador for Christ and a member of the true Church of God in a world growing darker by the day!

trumped up charges. This meant that no one would ever accept appointments to countries where the government is corrupt, and functions on bribes, personal favors, nepotism and rampant injustice.

Here is what everyone should understand, but most do not. Ambassadors of Christ do not push or in any way involve themselves in the social, political or cultural agendas of their host country. They represent *God's* laws, ways, values, truths, government and goals. Christians—true ones—are ambassadors for another, different government!

All Christians *do* enjoy obvious benefits as citizens in the country of their birth. They have certain immunities and privileges to enjoy the country to which God “assigns” them as ambassadors—while still representing their true government, foreign to where they live.

As ambassadors of *God's* Kingdom, God's *people* cannot participate in man's systems of government—at all. Their citizenship is derived—and held by—a different authority—HEAVEN!

Proof Number Five

Proof FIVE summarizes the previous three proofs Christians do not vote. Notice Matthew 6:24: “*No man can serve two masters*: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You *cannot* serve God and mammon.”

No human being can give equal allegiance, or loyalty, to *two* different masters of *any* kind. Jesus was actually teaching about seeking God and the accumulation of money (mammon) at the same time. Eventually, one takes precedence over the other and dominates the thinking of a person. Christians are to be totally loyal to the heavenly government they represent as ambassadors of Christ. As with ambassadors of earthly nations, they cannot participate in the politics of any country *other than their own*. In the world at large, this can cause violators to *lose their rights of citizenship*. Christians are the same!

Acts 5:29 explains that God's servants must in every circumstance when there is conflict between the two “...obey God rather than men.” Understand this. If one is a citizen of a government waiting in heaven to come to Earth and *replace* all governments of Earth, then he cannot stand with his feet resting in two *opposing* governments—God's and man's!

Proof Number Six

Proof SIX is based on God's view toward division and discord between people. He wants people to live together in unity and harmony. Notice Psalm 133:1: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for *brethren to dwell together in unity!*” It is a wonderful thing when people get along—when they AGREE. God hates division and discord. Notice this powerful verse: “Mark [meaning “take

note of”] them which cause *divisions* and *offenses* contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and *avoid them*” (Rom. 16:17). Here is another strong passage: “These...things does the Lord *hate*...he that sows *discord* among brethren” (Prov. 6:16, 19).

Involvement in politics would bring division and discord into the Church! How?

It has been said that there are two things that should never be discussed—never mind debated—*religion* and *politics*! How true. God’s people *never* push Jesus or His teachings—in politics or religion—at people. Few things are worse, and Christ condemned this. Violating this principle invariably leads to arguing, strife, fighting and even war. We have learned that Satan’s world is cut off (Isa. 59:1-2; Jer. 5:25) from the God who teaches the way to peace, harmony and unity. So, after an argument has developed concerning religion or politics there can be no resolution, no unity, except by ending the discussion.

What if the brethren in God’s Church voted in worldly elections? Two things could happen—one bad and the other worse. There is the slight possibility that everyone would vote for the *same* person. (That could still be bad, since it may *not* be the person GOD wanted.)

Worse, the moment voting is practiced in God’s Church, division is introduced. Amos 3:3 asks, “Can two walk *together* except they be *agreed*?” Soon enough, most people learn that the painful answer to this question is *No!* The political disagreement that breeds division and eventually splits countries, states, cities, towns, neighborhoods and families—also splits *congregations* and *denominations*!

Paul asked, “Is Christ divided?” The obvious answer is *no!* Christ is NOT divided and neither is His Church (I Cor. 1:10, 13). We have seen that Christ also said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is *brought to desolation*; and every city or house divided against itself *shall not stand*: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Matt. 12:25-26). It is interesting that even the DEVIL has figured this out! Leading a vast kingdom of fallen spirits (demons), he recognizes that he cannot let his kingdom become polarized into camps.

A professional football team cannot be divided and expect to win the Super Bowl. A baseball team cannot be torn with strife and win the World Series—or a professional hockey team the Stanley Cup. All divided families will eventually separate. The same is true of countries. The Church of God could hardly be different. Christ would not say that all *other* kinds of organizations or entities cannot be divided and survive, while the most important one that He directs—His Church—is an exception. Christ would never exempt His Church from this principle. It should be the epitome of unity and harmony! This is one reason He said, “the gates of hell” (Matt. 16:18) could never defeat the Church.

Have you wondered *why* the denominations of this world are so many—so divided—and why they *compete* with one another for members? It is because

they cannot *agree* on doctrine or administration. People must AGREE or there will be division in *every* endeavor. Politics is no different, and the only politics that God's servants should participate in are the "politics" of God!

If voting is practiced by, or introduced into, the Church, it would split—and God hates discord (division)!

Proof Number Seven

Proof SEVEN addresses the *system* that true Christians avoid, and at all costs. We read earlier that, speaking of the system of religious, political "Babylon," Revelation 18:4 gives direct instruction to God's people: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her; MY PEOPLE*, that you be not partakers of her sins." Also recall He commands, "*Come out from among them [the world], and be you separate*" (II Cor. 6:17). Babylon means *confusion*. The true servants of God have come out of this world, its Babylonish religions, governments and ways—they have left behind its teachings, division, strife and CONFUSION (I Cor. 14:33)!

Let's understand!

In John 17:15-17, when keeping the Passover on the last night before He was crucified, Christ reflected a central spiritual principle to His disciples, by praying, "I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil. They are not *of the world*, even as I am not of the world. *Sanctify them through Your truth: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH.*"

A Christian believes and follows the truth—the *whole* truth and nothing but the truth of God's Word—and not men's ideas about it! This sets him apart ("sanctifies" him) from all those around him. He is not *OF* this world and its ways, customs, beliefs and traditions. He has come out of it, leaving its values, ideas and personal philosophies behind. Thus, he would never seek or run for any political office within it.

Obviously, a Christian cannot live on Mars or in a cave. He cannot leave the planet or live as a hermit on a mountaintop, so that he is not "of" the world. Some religious zealots misunderstand Christ's Words and live in monasteries or retreats to avoid contact with people. Of course, Jesus did not do this. He did not mean come out of the *physical* world, but rather its SYSTEM of governments and religions. Christians practice and believe the TRUTH (John 17:17)—not popular ideas!

Proof Number Eight

Proof EIGHT concerns the fruits—the byproduct—of any system or leader. In Matthew 7:16, Christ stated, "You shall know them *by their fruits*." He repeated, "Wherefore *by their fruits* you shall know them" (vs. 20). Matthew 12:33 says, "...for the TREE is known *by his [its] fruit*." These verses are primarily speaking about leaders, but the principle has broad application.

Let's examine the fruits of the "tree" called *politics, voting and democracy*. It is based on the spirit of *competition* between political parties. Each party seeks to gain an advantage over the other and will even undercut good programs if it will cast a bad light on their opponents. During the political process preceding an election (often referred to as "election year politics"), the challenger will invariably oppose the incumbent seemingly at *every turn* on virtually *every issue*, to present himself as different, in the best light, solely to get elected. Over time, this has a devastating effect on the unity of a country that is supposed to stand behind its government. This openly—and sometimes bitterly—divides the citizenry of any nation.

Democracy is the form of government in three-fourths of the world's nations. Think of just some of its fruits: favoritism, endless debates and arguments, bribes, lust for power, corruption, lying and deceit, scandals and cover-ups, greed, exploitation, maneuvering and manipulation, aggression, relentless accusation, inefficiency, vanity, decisions based on polls, voter apathy, strife and back-stabbing. Remember that Winston Churchill said that democracy is *better* than all the other forms of human government! Democratic politics are shot full of division and disagreement, over nearly every issue that any society might face. (Read our booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems*. It explains *why* man and his governments are in the mess that they are—and *why* they will only grow worse.)

The fruit of the democratic way is CHAOS! Recall that national governments are led by the god of this world and his "wicked spirits [marginal rendering] in *high places*" (Eph. 6:12). These wicked spirits sit at the real throttle of power *behind* the visible governments of nations. The Greeks were much more right than they knew.

No Christian can participate in such a system!

Proof Number Nine

Proof NINE is short and simple—and easy to understand. Study the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single instance where balloting of any kind was used to select a leader. Nowhere in the Bible can you find people *electing* New Testament ministers or Old Testament priests—and the Bible is the pattern that Christians are supposed to follow in *all* matters. They are to "live by every word of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). God's Word neither authorizes nor reflects any pattern of voting.

Proof Number Ten

Finally, proof TEN bears consideration. Some candidates for office want to be a mayor—others a congressman—others a governor, judge or senator—or even a president or prime minister. Ask: What is every political candidate actually saying, between the lines, when he offers himself for the particular office that he is seeking? What is such a person saying about his *qualifications*?

Focus on a governor or a president—or perhaps the mayor of a city with millions of people. When a person seeks such a powerful office, that person is saying that he is qualified, in effect, to be considered a powerful leader. Such a person is actively seeking to *exalt himself* to a position of *great authority*. He is saying that he is sufficiently intelligent, talented, qualified, educated, experienced and wise to be entrusted with a great office of responsibility. Of course, no one puts it this way. But this is exactly what a candidate is declaring, whether or not he is honest enough to admit it. He is saying, much like Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30, that he is a great person, a great leader and the voting masses should hand him GREAT POWER! Voters directly assist such power-hungry, self-serving egotists in their climb to authority.

Here is God's perspective. Jesus said, "For whosoever *exalts* himself shall be *abased*; and he that *humbles* himself shall be *exalted*" (Luke 14:11). Several chapters later, in 18:14, He repeated almost the exact same thing. One look at the greedy, grasping demagogues who are modern politicians, with their pandering theatrics designed to play to the people's concerns—and this is just as true of religious leaders—and you will see that Jesus understood the corrupting nature of self-exaltation! He sees through the guise of phony concern for the people whose votes these "leaders" must get to receive the POWER they covet.

Some might look at Joseph and Daniel and claim that they sought the high offices they held. However, a careful reading of the accounts found in Genesis and Daniel reveal that they were appointed to their positions (Gen. 39:4; 41:39-44; Dan. 1:5; 2:48). There is no evidence that either of these men ever sought the high offices in which they served. In fact, before Joseph was given his new responsibilities, he was in prison, obviously unable to seek a position in government. These men were elevated to higher levels of service, they did not elevate themselves.

Christians are to humble themselves *now*, in this life (Matt. 18:1-4; James 4:10; I Pet. 5:5-6; Micah 6:8). This will allow God to exalt them *later* in His Kingdom, where they will rule alongside Jesus Christ in permanent positions of infinitely *greater* power and authority than any human office. Politicians exalt themselves and thereby ensure God will humble them at some later time, usually when they least expect it.

Christians understand the way God works. To participate in a system in which men *exalt themselves*, in the seeking of high office, is to endorse—to validate—to agree with—a corrupt system, with terrible fruit, emphasizing vanity, pride and arrogance. Democracy is completely opposite to what God expects of all people when He commands them to humble themselves!

Obeying Civil Authority

No part of this booklet is intended to suggest that Christians should *ever* disobey—or resist—civil authority—unless that authority directly instructs them to disobey the higher authority of God (Acts 5:29). Christians *never* participate in

protests or demonstrations, even non-violent ones, never mind violent ones—or participate in any form of war, which is of course always much more violent.

Here is just one thing Jesus said about this, speaking to Pilate while on trial, “My kingdom is *not of this world*: if My kingdom *were* of this world, *then* would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom *not from hence* [meaning, from *here*—this world].” But understand. Participating in the governments of men and obeying or submitting to them are entirely different matters. Christians do not confuse the two! They yield to—as very models of obedience—men’s governments at every level. Romans 13:1-7, among other scriptures, make unmistakably clear what God expects. (Our article *Should Christians Submit to Government Authority?* explains much more.)

What Herbert Armstrong Understood

Carefully review this extensive quote from an article written by Herbert W. Armstrong just prior to a presidential election, “How Would Jesus Vote for PRESIDENT?” I first read this nearly 35 years ago:

“We call ours the ‘republican’ form, or, erroneously, ‘Democracy.’ But it is a MAN-MADE form of administration of the BABYLONISH SYSTEM.

“ISRAEL—the United States, Britain, the ‘Democracies’ of northwestern Europe—modern Israel IS IN BABYLON TODAY, just as prophecy states (Jer. 50:1, 4-6, 8, Isa. 48: 1, 12-20, etc.). It is because of this—*because our sins are increasing*—because we have made alliances with heathen powers instead of relying upon our God—that the Eternal warns us our nations are soon to be invaded and conquered, in order to bring our people back to God (Isa. 47:1-6; Jer. 30:7-16, 24; Micah 5:8-11; Ezek. 3:1, 4-7, 17, 5:12-14; 6:11-14).

“Yes, ISRAEL IS IN A ‘BABYLONISH’ SYSTEM today, and GOD CALLS US OUT! (Rev. 18:4; Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9.)

Jesus Would Not Take Part

“What, then, would Jesus do...? He would WARN our people Israel: ‘COME OUT of her (Babylon), my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and *that ye receive not of her plagues!*’ The plagues of God are soon to fall upon BABYLON and all who choose to remain a part of ‘Babylon.’ JESUS CALLS YOU OUT!

“What would Jesus do? HE WOULD BE TOO BUSY PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF HIS OWN COMING WORLD-RULING KINGDOM, and the way of salvation, to take any part whatsoever in the politics of this present evil world, or in any man-made form of government that is DOOMED very soon to be destroyed and replaced by the Theocratic government of THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

“Our mission is, as Ambassadors of Christ—as advance emissaries of His KINGDOM—to WARN Israel of her plight and present danger, to proclaim to all nations the Good News of THE KINGDOM OF GOD!”

What About CHURCH Government?

The question arises, “I realize God doesn’t want us to participate in the politics of this world, but isn’t it alright if our *denominational leaders, doctrines and traditions*, and budgets, are decided by ballot? Is it not proper to vote on these things, particularly as long as we pray about it in advance and ask for God’s guidance?”

We already saw the Bible says nothing whatsoever about voting to elect leaders, decide doctrine, spend money—or on anything else. Asking God to guide a process, which He plainly explains is *not* how He works, is *foolish*. To do something—*ANYTHING!*—that is wrong, and then ask God to bless it, is bald hypocrisy—a charade He sees through. It asks God to endorse what He has explained in *numerous* verses is wrong—rebellion—*SIN!*

In regard to politics and voting, denominations are no different. Many of the ten proofs listed earlier also have direct application to religious groups. They need not be repeated and re-explained because the way these principles apply is obvious.

While the universal religion at Rome uses a designated “college” to elect its leader to a lifelong term, other denominations similarly elect, thru “congregational” or “presbyterian” style government, but just for shorter periods. In all cases, underlings elect the leaders over them. This means they retain the power to remove or “un-elect” leaders who do not “deliver” on the expectations of those who installed them.

Pastors can be hired and fired by councils of deacons, elders or others under them. Such pastors must preach what the people *want* to hear in lieu of what they *need* to hear or they will join the unemployment line.

The tail wags the dog.

In most denominations, on the national or international level, election of leaders and approval or rejection of doctrine is invariably subject to votes by councils or conferences of ministers. Since these groups do not practice God’s hierarchical method of government from the top down, it is of no use that they “pray” about decisions or ask God to “bless” their actions. Running for office in a denomination, tacitly asking for votes and practicing degrees of politics in order to get them, and voting are no less practices of Satan’s world, with its forms of democratic government, than are these practices when used in a civil setting. The honest person will admit that such councils, conferences and boards reflect the same fruits of democracy as civil governments.

Christ did not build this world’s many divided, competing, disagreeing groups, any more than He built the world’s divided, competing and disagreeing earthly nations with their governments. God is not leading them. The denominations of this world do not have, and do not practice, God’s truth on the matter of government or anything else. They are led by conventions or conferences of ministers, who meet regularly to ballot about matters that include who *THEY* wish to be their “president”—*THEIR* leader—for a humanly-set limit of time.

They have not selected *GOD'S* chosen leader—they have selected *THEIR OWN!* Such chosen leaders are governed, in every respect, by the “will of the people” or, in this case, the “will of the collective ministry” or the “will of a church council”—instead of *GOD'S WILL!*

If God selects the leaders of this world, as part of His own great Master Plan and purpose, then how much more would He personally select the leaders of *HIS CHURCH*? God would never employ a process that results in the “will of the people (or collective ministry)” being expressed, when it is *HIS WILL* that must determine what leader, or leaders, *He* will work through as *His* servants, in *His Church*!

Christ and His one Church are *not* divided. The fruits within *this Church*—found all over the world—are unity, harmony, happiness and zeal, among other positive effects. God’s people do not participate in men’s governments, and—sanctified by the truth—have come out of the world and its denominations built on the ideas of men. They represent and await the arrival of the greatest government the world has ever seen—now coming soon!

Recent Church History

We have seen that Christians do not participate in politics—in the democratic, political process of either this world’s governments or its denominations. But this does not mean that men will not periodically *attempt*, sometimes successfully, to bring democracy, voting and other elements of Satan’s forms of government into God’s own Church. Satan will never give up trying to overthrow the government of God within the true Church.

Several brief quotes are included here to help understand how Mr. Armstrong, in the 1970s, dealt with a time of subtle rebellion in the Worldwide Church of God. He had been traveling around the world, visiting many kings, presidents and prime ministers, approximately 300 days out of every year. In his absence, a group of liberal ministers rose up and sought to water down the doctrines of God within His Church. Similar efforts have occurred over the 2,000-year history of God’s Church.

One of the false doctrines these leaders tried to bring into the Church was that voting, either in worldly elections or within the Church, was nothing more than a personal preference that each individual must decide for himself.

When this plan came to Mr. Armstrong’s attention, he dealt with it swiftly, emphatically and based on the Word of God. Here is what he wrote:

“[The liberal] wants to be free to vote, at least in local elections.

“The argument was made to me that our Church people actually outnumbered others living in Big Sandy, Tex., BUT (what a big word is ‘BUT’) you see, if they did not vote, the minority would vote to incorporate the Ambassador College campus into the town of Big Sandy, and we’d have to pay big taxes. It never seemed to occur to the liberal mind that CHRIST will solve our problems, and we do not have to go contrary to HIS ATTITUDE!”

“What Is a Liberal?” *Good News* magazine, March 1979

“This means the local churches would be precisely like the Baptist churches in organizational structure and government. That concept is TOTALLY UNSCRIPTURAL. God’s Church is now established GOD’S WAY—the BIBLE WAY, under the biblical pattern, with Jesus Christ the living Head, under God the Father, and next under Christ those on earth He Himself has called and chosen, and through whom He has raised up this Church, and USED IT TO CARRY ON HIS WORK FOR THIS END-TIME as covered in the prophecy for OUR TIME in Matthew 24:14. GOD’S Church is organized the BIBLE WAY as directed in the Bible—through those HE has chosen and set in the various offices to get HIS WORK done.

“Those now advocating this Scriptural HERESY want to abolish all authority which Christ as our Head SET in His Church. Their contentions would lead to VOTING—the ‘democratic way’—the very OPPOSITE of God’s Way. They want to be ‘LIBERAL,’ and soon this liberality would lead into general and widespread SIN. They would become just a few more churches OF THIS WORLD—Satan’s world.

“Some ministers, [are] getting confused between this world’s politics in the American ‘democratic’ system, and THE WAYS OF GOD...

“These dissenting ministers want to desert God’s authority and ASSUME IT THEMSELVES. In other words they want ‘DEMOCRACY’, VOTING which is TOTALLY un-scriptural. They want to be part of THIS world—Satan’s world.”

Letter to Brethren, Feb. 25, 1974

The next quote is included to demonstrate that voting was never practiced in God’s Church when ministers came together to counsel, discuss and make decisions:

“In every instance where God’s ministers in this Philadelphia era of the Church have come together to make a ruling, our minds have been put in complete accord. There is no voting.

“We ministers know that we serve a dynamic, living, all-powerful supernatural GOD! We *fear* to disobey, or to fail to be submissive. We *know* well what would happen to us if we should ever permit self-will to sway us in any decision.”

“Christ Did Put Authority and RULE In His Church,”
Good News, Jan. 1957

Does God’s Church Elect Its Leaders?

Jesus told His disciples, “I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18). He is the Head of that Church—His Church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18)! (Read our book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* It carefully explains how to identify where that Church is now, and shows where it *has been* for the 2,000 years since Christ built it.)

Throughout history, God has appointed *His* servants and *His* leaders. This has always been the Bible pattern. God selects, trains and raises up the men through whom He works. Christ called, chose and ordained His apostles to preach the gospel and to lead the early Church. They were not voted into office, except for the lone “vote” cast by God, which was enough to make their selection unanimous. They did not make themselves “available” to an electorate and then, either subtly or overtly, “politic” their way to victory by greeting the right people, shaking the right hands or offering the most popular platform.

I have seen many such “leaders.” While attempting to portray themselves as men of strong doctrine, ethics, integrity and principle, they must use flattery to “position themselves” to advance their own candidacy. They often act as though they will “accept” office, if “drafted,” to not *appear* to be seeking personal advancement. Wishing to *appear* humble and godly, they are invariably filled with a coveting—a LUST—for power and prestige! When a man sets out to be elected to *any* office (in a civil or religious setting), no matter how it is spun, he is seeking to promote and exalt himself!

God never works either through men like this or a system that promotes them. He knows that political elections corrupt people, and He cannot work in a process where men must corrupt *themselves* in order to rise. God does not need men’s votes to elevate His choice to higher office. Democracy, in either a civil or religious setting, is a human invention not of God!

Many Old and New Testament verses plainly show that God works from the top down—always starting with ONE MAN, who in turn appoints others, who themselves sometimes appoint others, and so on. It is always done without voting—with balloting.

Those who vote usually *label* it “God’s will being done,” but the results of their elections are still merely the “will of the people.” The twelve apostles did not choose or “vote in” Christ—*He* chose *them*. A large conference of ministers did not pick the twelve apostles—the apostles, with Christ guiding, picked the ministry under them (Titus 1:5-9; I Tim. 3:1-7, etc.).

The Church of God always has a leader appointed by God. That man seeks to follow God’s will in *all* matters. He never concerns himself with, “What will the *people* think?” He never asks, “Will the people *like* me if I do this, or *dislike* me if I do that?” Nor does he ever have to concern himself with “re-election”—receiving the people’s approval so he can stay in office!

Christ, under the Father, still selects and raises up His leaders today! Then God blesses the efforts of His chosen leader, who then selects others, who in turn select others, and so forth, as this Church—God’s Church—grows in size!

An Incredible Dream

This final quote describes an incident, in which Mr. Armstrong had a dream he felt was intended to reveal an important lesson to him and the Church. It occurred shortly after the period in the 1970s (referenced earlier, when liberal

leaders sought to inject democracy into the Church), and inspired the title of one of my first books *Except the Lord Build the House*:

"I awakened considerably impressed with the dream. Was God revealing to me that TOO MANY within the Church membership are *leaving GOD out of the picture*?—in their own minds putting *GOD* out of the Church?...that *the people* should say to GOD, 'This is OUR Church, God, we want you to GET OUT of the Church and leave us alone. WE will run this Church OUR way!' I awakened impressed that TOO MANY of our people are LEAVING GOD AND CHRIST OUT OF HIS CHURCH, and trying to make it OUR Church—*the church of the PEOPLE*, and NOT the CHURCH of GOD!"

"[In the 70s] There were at least six or seven in TOP offices next to Christ's apostle in authority—men trusted and honored. But they were going to make it 'THE CHURCH OF PEOPLE,' instead of the CHURCH OF GOD. They could not see God nor Christ in their mental picture of God's Church. They were LIBERALS!

"Now churches or works OF THEIR OWN have been started. But they overlook one thing: 'EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE, THEY LABOUR IN VAIN THAT BUILD IT.'

"GOD is not building their houses!"

"Shall We All Leave THE CHURCH OF GOD and join 'THE CHURCH OF PEOPLE'?"

Good News, Sept. 1980

Christians participating in the governments of Satan's world, through voting, military service or activism in social causes, is far more serious to God than most realize. It is disloyalty—a form of *spiritual fornication* and *spiritual treason*—to the government of God and His complete authority over a Christian's life.

At the center of the gospel of the Kingdom of God is a message about God's soon-coming, hierarchical GOVERNMENT. The followers of Jesus Christ practice this leadership structure now. Any group that participates in the democratic politics of this world or that elects its leaders and makes other decisions by voting *IS NOT A HOUSE BUILT BY GOD!* (Psa. 127:1).

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!
- Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!
- A World in Captivity
- Did God Create Human Nature?
- War, Killing and the Military
- What Is the Kingdom of God?
- Which Is the True Gospel?
- *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems*
- “Should Christians Submit to Government Authority?”

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