

KEEPING THE SABBATH AT HOME

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Short Questions from Our Readers," *Plain Truth*, April 1968:

"Nowhere is there any prophecy that Christ's ONE TRUE CHURCH should become great and powerful, exerting influence in this world. Rather, Jesus called it the 'LITTLE FLOCK,' despised, persecuted, scattered by the world -- totally separate from the world -- yet living in the world."

"The receiving of God's Spirit and the MIND OF CHRIST (Phil. 2:5) upon repentance and baptism PUTS YOU INTO, baptizes you into God's true Church!"

"Church attendance is not the most important thing! Church attendance does not, by itself, mean CHURCH MEMBERSHIP in God's sight! Some people view 'church going' as an end in itself. But it most definitely is not.

"God expressly forbids His people ever to join in with the worship of counterfeit church bodies -- no matter how 'close' to the truth they might seem!"

"Your eternal salvation is at stake! May God help you to heed this warning!"

Herbert W. Armstrong, *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* 1976:

"Often, when people learn about the Sabbath, they seek some religious group to assemble with. But it is not enough to meet with just any religious body because it may accept the 'Sabbath argument.' This does not necessarily mean it is the TRUE Church of God."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Should We Listen to Others?" *Good News*, May 1960:

"If you have truly repented, you have stopped using human reason and acting according to the way you look at it! If you had the faith in Christ as personal Saviour to be baptized into Him, you were accepting HIM as your Lord and Master, to obey what HE says -- not the way you look at it. If you have received God's Holy Spirit, it is to lead you into all TRUTH -- which means understanding of GOD'S WORD, and what it instructs on all these questions, so that you know what to obey.

"Suppose you live in an area where GOD'S Church has not yet established a local congregation."

"It has seemed to many in this situation that, since Seventh Day Adventists keep the right DAY, it would be all right to attend the nearest church of their denomination. Besides, is it not necessary to keep your children in Sabbath school?"

"It has come to our attention that several of our members have reasoned in this manner. Isn't it necessary, as a Christian duty, to attend regular church services?"

"There is only one passage in all the New Testament giving any direct instruction to assemble together with others: '...and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.' (Heb. 10:24-25).

"Even there, it is not a direct command that you must assemble together with others in the church -- for the simple reason that God knew, when He inspired His instruction to us, that some would be living where there is no church to attend. Notice, the command is: 'not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.' The very words: 'not forsaking' mean you are not to 'abandon' -- not to 'refuse' assembling -- not to 'desert' assembling."

"If you live where God does not have a church near enough to attend, then you are certainly not refusing, abandoning, or deserting attendance, because that attendance is not in your power."

"The Sabbath is a holy convocation (Lev. 23:2), which is a commanded assembly -- one you are commanded to attend. But of course this command applies within realm of your ability."

"During apostolic days many local churches were established.... Some merely met in the houses of members. 'The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.' (I Cor. 16:19). In Col. 4:15 you read of the church in Nymphas' house in Laodicea -- and this

evidently was one of the important churches. There was a church in Philemon's house (Phile. 2)."

"With whom are we to have FELLOWSHIP?"

"The Apostle John, in his first letter, declared God's TRUTH in order 'that ye also may have fellowship with us...' showing we can have fellowship ONLY with those who know and obey the TRUTH. Do you know any other Church that knows, believes, preaches, and OBEYS the TRUTH? -- that keeps the true Sabbath, and also God's Holy Days and Festivals; that knows the Resurrection was on the Sabbath and the crucifixion on Wednesday; that knows God's PURPOSE is that we, now mortal, are to be begotten, and then, after a life of overcoming, growing in knowledge of Christ and in grace, developing godly CHARACTER, are to be BORN of God at which time we BECOME divine members of the very God family; that the soul is mortal; that this is not the time God is trying to save the world, but only His 'first-fruits'; that Christ is coming to rule all nations with God's WORLD GOVERNMENT, on earth, for a thousand years; that the Gospel is the Message of the KINGDOM OF GOD, which is both the world-GOVERNMENT of God and the FAMILY of God into which we may be born; and many other TRUTHS held and proclaimed ONLY by this one and only TRUE Church of God!"

"YOU are to have fellowship only with those who know and obey the TRUTH!"

"Our fellowship is, first of all, WITH God the Father, and WITH Jesus Christ [I John 1:3]! If I have fellowship with Christ, and YOU have fellowship with Christ, then HE joins you and me together in fellowship. You cannot have true Christian fellowship with any, except those who also have fellowship with God the Father and with Christ."

"Brethren, that narrows fellowship -- assembling together for worship -- down to ONLY those who are in God's TRUTH -- the true LIGHT -- and who OBEY it. And that means ONLY those whom God has, by His Holy Spirit, put into HIS TRUE CHURCH. We are barred from fellowship or worship with any others."

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, and there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' (I Cor. 1:9-10).

"We must have fellowship only with Jesus Christ, and those who are joined together in the TRUTH -- all speaking the same TRUTH."

"Now suppose you try to find fellowship with members of a Seventh Day Adventist church. They may worship on the right day, but they do not keep God's annual Sabbaths and Festivals; they do not proclaim the true Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD which is to rule THE EARTH for the millennium; they do not believe we are to be actually born into the divine, glorified FAMILY or Kingdom of God; and they do break the second Commandment with their many idolatrous pictures of a long-haired man they falsely call 'Christ'; they do believe lies and errors, such as their 'Sanctuary Question,' 'Investigative Judgment,' Mrs. White's inspiration as God's 'Prophet'; going to heaven, etc., etc."

"God commands you: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness (keeping of God's Commandments) with unrighteousness? and what communion hath LIGHT (TRUTH) with darkness? ...WHEREFORE COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE, SAITH THE LORD.' (II Cor. 6:14-17).

"All this does not mean that we cannot have any contacts with the world, or people of other beliefs."

"Paul clears this up: 'I did not mean you were literally to avoid contact with the immoral of this world, with the lustful and the thievish, or with idolaters; in that case you would have to leave the world altogether. What I now write is that you are not to associate with any so-called brother.... Associate with him? Do not even eat with him.' (I Cor. 5:10-11 Moffatt translation).

"We are not to have social or religious FELLOWSHIP -- close friendship -- with any except those who know and OBEY the TRUTH. We must not try to WORSHIP with them -- attend their churches."

"Again God instructs through Paul: 'Have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful works of darkness.' (Eph. 5:11).

"You can WORSHIP GOD three times a day -- in a private room, behind closed doors -- on your knees, in prayer. DO YOU?"

"You can have FAMILY WORSHIP in your own home -- husband, wife, and children -- every morning. DO YOU?"

"If you hunger for fellowship, remember you can, and MUST, for true worship, have regular daily

fellowship with Christ, and with God the Father, to whom Christ has given you direct access in prayer!"

"Well, the way I look at it,' some might say, 'is this: it would be discourteous not to admit [those of other beliefs], and that wouldn't be "Christian," would it?"

"BUT HOW DOES *GOD* LOOK AT IT?"

"God says, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.' (Isa. 55:8).

"What does God *COMMAND*?"

"For many deceivers ... are entered into the world.... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not (obeys not) in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.... If there comes any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (of Christ, and of God's true Church), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.' (II John 7-11)."

"[Jehovah Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists] will argue Scripture, in a spirit of contention, which your Bible forbids.... God says you, also, are partaker with them of their evil deeds if you receive them into your home."

"YOU CANNOT CHANGE THEM! You cannot talk them into the TRUTH!"

"But all these temptations to ensnare you into the world -- into false doctrines -- into forbidden fellowship or false worship are mild compared to the one in our very midst, HARDEST OF ALL TO RESIST!"

"The Apostle Paul, speaking his farewell to the elders of the large Church of God at Ephesus, said:

"I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts 20:29-30).

"THAT DID HAPPEN IN THAT CHURCH!"

"The greatest danger of all is when one who is among us, supposed to be one of us, approaches you with some doctrine or interpretation CONTRARY to that of God's Church....

"Whether it be a so-called 'Jehovah Witness' or even one supposedly a member of God's own Church, remember THIS COMMAND:

"If there come ANY unto you' -- it does not say member of another church -- it says if ANY come unto you -- 'and bring not this doctrine, RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE...' -- DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!"

"What we say is, do not listen any longer to those who bring a DIFFERENT doctrine! If you have already seen these truths for yourself -- already PROVED them in your own Bible -- already proved this is the true Church of God, then God's TEACHING, as I have shown you in this article from the BIBLE, is, DO NOT LISTEN to those who bring a different doctrine."

"He is coming with a different doctrine -- he is causing division, tending to stir up strife and introduce confusion -- and he must be MARKED, and disfellowshipped, and refused to be in the fellowship of any of our brethren!

"This is GOD'S WAY of preserving UNITY!"

58-lesson *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, Lesson 49:*

"There were scattered Christians in south Italy [Acts 28:14] as well as in Rome, but at the time no organized congregations in either area, outside of family worship in private homes."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Why Many Don't Understand Pentecost," *Good News*, May 1981:

"Do you realize that we kept all these Holy Days alone, by ourselves, while the Church of God members we then knew and fellowshipped with (Sardis era, Rev. 3:1-6) 'mocked us to scorn'?"

"Hezekiah sent messengers up into Israel, the northern kingdom, from city to city in Ephraim and Manasseh, to teach them God's Holy Days must be kept. But 'they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them' (II Chron. 30:1-10).

"I had learned in my intensive, almost night-and-day study of the Sabbath question that we are commanded also to keep the seven annual Holy Days.

"I DID NOT KNOW WHY! I knew only that God said, 'DO IT!' My wife and I did -- alone! For seven years!"

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Why God Is Not Real to Most People," article reprint, 1974:

"Inferiority manifests itself in a desire to belong to a group, club, society, church, faction, or nation. In order to avoid feeling inferior, the self instinctively desires to be accepted by other people."

"One would fear to be disloyal, lest the others in this factional group consider him as a traitor -- and therefore as evil -- and he feels inferior, which is a painful feeling."

"Only a few have ever been willing to break away from the established ideas and customs of their immediate society. All others have avoided them or persecuted them."

58-lesson Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, Lesson 27:

"God has shown you in His Word that if you have truly repented of your disobedience to His laws, you will want to zealously begin keeping God's Sabbath Day."

"On this day you will be especially close to God, and you'll grow in His spiritual grace and knowledge through PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY."

"But keeping the Sabbath as God commands does not mean that you must attend church on this day. You may KEEP THE SABBATH *RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME* for the present."

"Why stay at home? Because there are certain churches into which you might be misled. Churches which happen to observe the seventh-day Sabbath.... But don't be deceived!"

"Just because these churches have a 'form of Godliness' (II Tim. 3:5) -- have an outward appearance of 'keeping' God's Sabbath -- does not mean you should attend their services! For in reality, these churches disobey God in most points of His law."

"So keep God's Sabbath right in your own home by resting, studying your Bible ... and by praying to GOD!"

58-lesson Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, Lesson 30:

"While a few other 'churches' now may 'observe' [the Sabbath], they do NOT live by every word of God."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Short Questions," Plain Truth, November 1949:

"While we are instructed, in Heb. 10:23-25: 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching' -- yet, notice carefully we are not instructed to assemble with blinded, deceived people ... the instruction is to not forsake the assembling of *ourselves* together -- that is, true Christians who have the TRUTH, who are filled with God's Holy Spirit, truly converted, and WALKING IN THE LIGHT, living by every Word of God."

"The point is, we must be sure it is with those who are CHRISTIANS -- those in the Truth -- those living by the directions in the Bible -- those keeping God's Commandments -- those filled with his Spirit, those in whom Christ is living His life. Not those merely professing to be Christians; professing to know God, but in works denying Him (Titus 1:6), being abominable."

"If you are converted and made righteous by the Spirit of God, 'what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' (II Cor. 6:14)."

"No, God commands us, 'Have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful works of darkness.' (Eph. 5:11). If God has opened your understanding to His TRUTH, it is precious beyond price. 'If there come any to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.' (II John 10)."

"When the disciples asked Jesus if MANY were being saved, he explained that the many turn into the broad way that leads to destruction -- but FEW find the straight and narrow way that leads to everlasting life. Those in His true fellowship He called the 'Little Flock.' He said He would hardly find any faith at all in our generation today, when He is to come again."

"Remember, our fellowship is WITH THE FATHER, AND WITH JESUS CHRIST first of all, and with one another only in and thru Christ (I John 1:1-7). You can have communion and fellowship with Him wherever you are. Withdraw at once from all other fellowship, except that of CHRIST, and those who are IN CHRIST, and Christ IN THEM."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Personal," *Good News*, April 1979:

"There's no question about it -- God commands emphatically that we in His Church do 'all speak the same thing' (I Cor. 1:10).

"For many years I have striven to bring all God's children into a unity of belief (Ps. 133:1).

"Of all the religions and all the more than 250 denominations and sects in 'Christianity,' NOT ONE, except the Worldwide Church of God, knows WHO and WHAT God is! NOT ONE knows what, and why, MAN IS! NOT ONE knows the TRUTH about the nation Israel -- WHY God chose them, yet gave none but their prophets His Holy Spirit -- where they are today. NOT ONE knows what is the TRUE GOSPEL Christ proclaimed! NOT ONE knows what happens in the hereafter -- the transcendent human potential."

"NONE but God's one and only TRUE CHURCH has the full knowledge God has revealed to His own Church. NOT ONE knows what salvation really is!

"Doesn't it, then, become abundantly apparent that we must all know precisely what God has prepared for those who love Him -- and that we speak these amazing TRUTHS as they are -- all speaking the same thing?"

"But first, WHY is it important that we all believe and speak the same DOCTRINES? Continue in I Corinthians 1:10: 'that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.'"

"A corollary to I Corinthians 1:10 is Romans 16:17-18: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.'

"'Avoid them' means just that. Walk away from them. Do not invite them into your home. 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed' (II John 10)."

"To the Thessalonians God made this a command: 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received from us [that is, from Christ's true apostles] ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him' (II Thess. 3:6, 14).

"This is SO IMPORTANT to GOD that He had the apostle John, in the 90s, A.D., write, as quoted above, 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine' (as received through Christ's apostles), 'receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed' (II John 10)."

"WHY DOES GOD WANT US -- COMMAND US! -- to mark and avoid those who come with a different doctrine? Because they create DIVISION among God's people! 'And' (Rom. 16:18) 'by good words and fair speeches' they DECEIVE those who listen -- they claim to serve God -- but they DO NOT AGREE with God."

L. Leroy Neff, "Beware of False Brethren," *Good News*, January 1960:

"There are some among us who are not converted. They are not a real spiritually living part of the body of Christ. They are not letting Christ do His work in them. They have not truly and completely surrendered their lives to Christ in full repentance."

"In New Testament times just one man caused a whole congregation to sin. Part of this account is recorded in I Corinthians 5. Because of this man's sin, the whole Church became puffed up (verse 2). They became guilty with him in his evil deeds."

"Paul instructed the Church previously that the brethren should not company (associate) with those in the Church who were openly violating God's laws (verses 9 and 11). A Christian should not associate, or even eat with such a person!"

"God instructs us through the Apostle Paul: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them' (Rom. 16:17)."

"Paul even makes this instruction stronger: 'Now WE COMMAND you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye WITHDRAW YOURSELVES from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us' (II Thess. 3:6)."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Can We Fellowship the Disfellowshipped?" *Worldwide News*, 1980:

"Are some of us trying to be more kind, merciful and considerate even than GOD? Are we actually disobeying God in our soft, fence-straddling approach toward certain others?"

"Now we COMMAND YOU, brethren, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly,' and, 'if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him...' (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14)."

"God is far more strict in all such matters within the Church than we have sometimes been inclined to be."

"We MUST NOT appear to try to be more kind than God. Christ will say, 'Depart from me!' WE MUST NOT COMPROMISE! GOD DOES NOT!"

"I do pray for all such. I pray that God will BLESS THEM -- with whatever He in His supreme wisdom knows is BEST FOR THEM -- even though that may be severe PUNISHMENT!"

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Which Family Comes First?" *Good News*, April 1980:

"In Romans 16:17 it speaks of marking 'them which cause DIVISIONS and OFFENCES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED.'"

"In II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15 is the COMMAND: 'Now we COMMAND YOU, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye WITHDRAW yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed ...'"

"It is a COMMAND. And if we try to be MORE KIND -- MORE RIGHTEOUS -- than God and DISOBEY THAT COMMAND, we convict ourselves of disobedience to God's COMMAND!"

"Judging and Discipline in God's Church," *Good News*, August 1958:

"Millions of sincere but misguided people are mixed-up about the meaning of Jesus' words recorded in Matt. 7:1-5.

"How often have you heard someone reprimanded for stating his belief that someone else had done wrong by the exclamation, 'Judge not, brother. Jesus said we shouldn't judge other people, you know.'"

"Jesus showed that instead of pronouncing sentence upon sinners, as Israel's judges had in the past, it was now the duty of God's representatives to teach them the right way and command them to repent of the wrong way."

"If, after [following the instruction in Matt. 18:15-20], the sinning party refuses to repent, Christ said that you are to treat him as an unbeliever. Does this mean you are to hate him or to hold him in contempt? It certainly does not. It simply means that you are to treat him as an unconverted outsider and have no fellowship with him." [Herbert W. Armstrong, "A Policy Statement," *Good News*, September 25, 1978: "In ordinary cases of a member having or feeling any criticism against his pastor, he should, first, obey Matthew 18:15 and take it to his local pastor in private."]

"Up until recently most of us didn't fully understand the necessity of purging the evil out of God's church. We thought perhaps God would take care of it without us doing anything. And it *seemed* like it would be showing more love if we just tried to tolerate evildoers in our midst and hoped for the best.

"But can we show more love than God? Are our ideas wiser than God's plan? The answer is obviously 'no.'

"In his early ministry among God's people, Mr. Armstrong found by hard experience that if sinners are not put out of God's church as Christ commanded, a little leaven does leaven the whole lump. Sin spreads like wildfire if it is tolerated."

"False teachers must be 'marked' and refused further admittance and association with God's church. This is the command of Almighty God. People who rely on human reason may think this is a lack of love. But this is God's way -- and God is love."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Organizing Local Churches," *Good News*, June 1951:

"Thousands of you, we fully realize, long for local churches of God to be established in your various localities."

"In the earlier days of this work, a number of little flocks were raised up in different localities throughout Oregon and Washington -- the result of the personal evangelistic campaigns by your pastor.

"But there was no shepherd to leave behind to pastor and guide and feed those flocks. And it was never long until these groups were broken up. They would soon be quarreling among themselves, or various ones would lead the others off the truth on various wild tangents, or some wolf in sheep's clothing would come along and, pretending to be a true preacher of Jesus Christ, devour and destroy the flock."

"We know how discouraging it is for some of you dear people to have to remain isolated -- way off by yourselves, away from others who also know and live God's true Way, surrounded by worldly people and paganized churches. We understand your problem in raising your children in such a world. Our hearts go out to you!"

"But we know also that ... no greedy 'wolf in sheep's clothing' is going to waste much of his time trying to draw off one single individual or family. The false prophets usually go after whole groups who are without shepherds.

"So, let's not grumble! Rather be thankful you are so much better off than before!"

58-lesson Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, Lesson 28:

"PREPARE YOURSELF for God's Kingdom. You can do this by zealously studying God's Word -- the Bible -- and by praying to God on the Sabbath.

"You can be literally filled with God's Holy Spirit on this day of especially close contact with God -- the Spirit will then guide you into all truth (John 16:13)."

"If you worship God every Sabbath by praying to Him and studying His Word and its application in your life, and put it into DAILY PRACTICE during the week, then you will have God's Sabbath 'sign' in the true and saving sense. You will be PREPARING to enter God's Kingdom as a priest and ruler! (Rev. 5:10.)"

"However, we do know it is the earnest desire of true believers to meet together with brethren of like understanding on the Sabbath in obedience to God's injunction found in Hebrews 10:24-25. But for a few this may not yet be possible because they are scattered as salt of the earth and consequently cannot assemble on the Sabbath. Our Heavenly Father knows about this situation and, therefore, does not expect them to attend one of His church services on the Sabbath when it isn't possible!

"Remember that our fellowship must be first and foremost with the Father and with Jesus Christ, and then, if possible, with one another -- but only in and through Christ (I John 1:3-7). Those not able to attend Sabbath services can have this communion and fellowship with God right in their own homes, or wherever they happen to be on the Sabbath!"

"Without a trained minister of God, disunity, contention and error will inevitably arise in a local group. They would soon be quarreling among themselves, or some dominant personality would lead the others from the truth into various wild tangents, or some wolf in sheep's clothing would come along pretending to be a true minister of Jesus Christ, only to devour and destroy the flock! Mr. Armstrong's past experience with such unshepherded flocks proves it!

"So don't become discouraged if you can't fellowship with others of like understanding on the Sabbath. You can still keep in continual close contact with God's true Church by spiritually feeding upon God's Word."

"So GROW in the knowledge of Christ and His Word right in your own home on every day of the week -- especially on the Sabbath!"

Herman L. Hoeh, "Should You Assemble Without a Minister?" *Good News*, October 1957; reprinted *Good News*, June 1959:

"Many feel the necessity of social contact with brethren. They equally desire to learn more about the Bible. What could be better than meeting each Sabbath for Bible study, it is reasoned!"

"Immediately some will think of Hebrews 10:25. 'We should assemble ourselves together,' they will say."

"But what will happen?"

"Wherever groups gather together a dominant individual inevitably arises. By force of personality others begin to look to him -- even though he may not understand the Bible as well as they. He becomes a leader. Yet he may not be capable of keeping order. He is usually the center of arguments, doubts and divisions. Dissension and error gradually arise. Some brethren leave in disgust -- soured on the truth.

"We are experiencing the same problem which confronted the early, inspired, Spirit-filled Church of God. The apostolic Church was a scattered Church (Acts 11:19). So are you brethren today!"

"Paul did not establish churches without pastors! EVERY local church had its pastor."

"Mr. Armstrong has learned by experience that every group needs competent spiritual leadership.... Even though many of you are scattered and have no regular Sabbath service, yet be thankful that you are being instructed through [the Church literature]."

"Let's realize our blessings and be thankful, no matter where we are."

Herman L. Hoeh, "Talk About the Bible," *Good News*, January 1962:

"Hundreds of you brethren still have no local church. Yet you can and do visit one another."

"We have never said you must not talk about the Bible unless a minister is present. We have said you should not assemble as a local group for Bible study and teach each other without a minister."

"If the Bible isn't something you should ever talk about, why talk at all? Why visit brethren, if you cannot talk about the very Book that tells you how to be brethren?"

"Why, the very reason you should want to be with brethren, instead of the world, is that you can discuss the Bible and spiritual topics. If you cannot talk about the Bible with each other, then you are no different from the world! The one thing that makes the people around you worldly is that they have nothing else to talk about except material things and other people! The one thing that ought to make your conversation different from the world is that you can talk about God and His Word!"

"If your brethren are feeling downcast ... inspire them by your experiences -- what God has done for and through you -- and turn to the Bible and read Bible examples of what God did and has promised still to do for us today."

"The Sabbath ... is a day for us to study and pray, read and meditate on the Bible in private communion with God, or together wherever there is a local church of God. Yet some brethren carelessly have acquired the habit of visiting on the Sabbath without talking about the Bible. Shame on you!"

"God expressly forbids us to speak our own words -- worldly, material conversation -- on His Holy Sabbath. Isaiah was inspired to write: '...call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; ...honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, NOR SPEAKING THINE OWN WORDS' (Isa. 58:13). The Sabbath is the only day we especially ought to speak of, and talk about, God's words -- the Bible."

"At times some have even made the Sabbath a burden and not a delight by spending most of their time at the homes of brethren instead of praying and reading and studying their Bible in their own home. The Sabbath is not a day for social fellowship -- it is a day for personal spiritual fellowship -- it is a day for personal spiritual fellowship with God in Heaven, and with Christ. Our spiritual fellowship with one another is always through Christ. Most of our time needs to be spent with Him, in prayer, in reading and studying His Word. Then, if time permits, it is encouraging to visit on the Sabbath for a little while those brethren who are elderly, or afflicted, or who have no other spiritual contact because of unconverted relatives and family. Read the Bible to them or the [Church's] magazines if they are unable to read."

"Finally, brethren, remember this: you can and should open your Bible and read verses about a subject that might come up in your conversation. How else are you going to know exactly what God says about any problem? If you are not sure about it, you have the *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, *The Good News* and *The Plain Truth* and the booklets to check up in."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Should You Welcome Visitors at Church?" *Good News*, September 1962:

"Suppose you have a neighbor who knows you keep the Sabbath, and is not hostile. Perhaps this neighbor ... asks you to explain a question about the Sabbath -- why we don't observe Sunday, or hasn't time been lost? or isn't the law done away -- or some other question. What should you do?"

"Unless you know that you thoroughly know the subject, and have the ability to explain it plainly and convincingly, it would be better to hand the neighbor a booklet -- or booklets -- that explain the subject.... Tell your neighbor that this booklet will explain it so much better than you could."

"In case you do feel qualified to explain it yourself (as you should be -- though most of you are not), follow this method:

"First, ask the neighbor into your home, or go yourself to his. Have your Bible. When seated quietly, free from interruption, open your Bible, turning to proper Scriptures one at a time. Instead of reading it yourself, hand the Bible to your friend and have him read aloud each passage. Then you carefully explain and expound it, and

turn to the next passage and have your neighbor read that, and so on."

Herbert W. Armstrong, *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume 1, 1986:*

"My wife had become acquainted with an elderly neighbor lady, Mrs. Ora Runcorn. Mrs. Runcorn was an avid student of the Bible."

"One day Mrs. Runcorn gave her a Bible study. She asked my wife to turn to a certain passage and read it. Then a second, then a third, and so on for about an hour. Mrs. Runcorn made no comment -- gave no explanation or argument -- just asked my wife to read aloud a series of Biblical passages.

"'Why!' exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong in amazement, 'do all these Scriptures say that I've been keeping the wrong day as the Sabbath all my life?'"

"'Well, do they?' asked Mrs. Runcorn. 'Don't ask me whether you have been wrong -- you shouldn't believe what any person tells you, but only what GOD tells you through the Bible. What does He tell you, there? What do you see there with your own eyes?'"

Herbert W. Armstrong, "What Do Churchgoers Believe and Why?" *Good News, February 1984:*

"My wife and I became acquainted with a woman who, in some ways, was rather peculiar.

"This woman really had a religion. She read and studied the Bible every day. She seemed to understand it! She had definite beliefs and convictions, and she said the SOURCE of all of them was not anything she had heard at church, but what she read in the Bible. She said the Bible carried authority, and was the only source of knowing the TRUTH.

"She actually studied the Bible to learn how to live -- not just on Sunday, but every day! Actually this woman was HAPPY in her religion. She prayed a great deal, and she seemed to really know God and to be on personal terms with Him!"

"This woman was a 'Bible Christian.' The SOURCE from which she got what she believed was the Bible."

Herbert W. Armstrong, "Why God Is Not Real to Most People," *Good News, January 1985:*

"Are you like the person who said to me, 'Oh, I believe in God all right, but it seems like He is so far off -- so UNREAL?'"

"Yet the true God does reveal Himself, to those who are willing to comprehend and to obey."

"When I was brought to ... repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ, in early 1927, and was baptized, He gave me the most precious GIFT in all the universe -- His Holy Spirit.

"His Spirit opened my mind to SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION. I could UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE -- a bit at a time, of course. In it, the living Jesus Christ began talking to me. I began to talk to Him -- often, daily, in a sense constantly, in spirit. When I studied the Bible, it was like listening to the most wonderful Friend I had ever known! It was WONDERFUL! It was INTERESTING -- INSPIRING -- REVEALING! So I studied the Bible often on my knees.

"You see, as I read the Bible, God was talking to me. But as I prayed, I was talking to HIM! And by studying His Word on my knees, I was able to carry on a two-way conversation with Him -- mixing prayer with listening to Him through reading His words.

"It was invigorating, rejuvenating beyond words to describe. He was TEACHING ME."

"As He told me about Himself -- as He talked to me, instructed me -- and as I talked to Him -- I got to know Him! He BECAME REAL!

"He was no longer WAY OFF! He was very NEAR -- in spirit, in the very same room."

L. Leroy Neff, "'Please Give Us a Church!'" *Good News, December 1959:*

"'We need a church where we can meet each Sabbath,' was a statement frequently heard at the recent Feast of Tabernacles."

"Yes, God's Church was scattered almost nineteen hundred years ago, and it has remained scattered to this day! If it were contrary to God's will that the Church be scattered, then He would call people in local church areas only. Therefore, the scattering and calling of God is according to His own Divine plan and will."

"If God's people were all congregated together, and not scattered, then it could not be said of them that they are the salt of the earth."

"God knows that a very large percentage of you may never have a local congregation to attend. Has God made a mistake? NO!"

"If you are dissatisfied in not having a church to attend, have you ever read the statement of the apostle Paul in Phil. 4:11 '...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'"

"Some of you state that you do not have fellowship with others in the Church. What greater, more profitable, and more wonderful fellowship can you have than with Jesus Christ, the very head of this Church! When you read His Word, He talks to you. By prayer, you can talk to Him. That fellowship can be wonderful beyond all words.

"That is the fellowship you can have every day, and not just on the Sabbath."

"If you are not able to attend local services, you are not alone. Possibly three-fourths of God's people are not able to attend local church services regularly."

"Don't feel sorry for yourself, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ wherever you are."