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Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ:

In Manila it is the morning of January 20th. Later today, noon EST, President Ronald Reagan will be sworn into office as President of the United States for the next four years. We have just started the second year of the decade of the eighties. WHAT LIES AHEAD, vital to us in God's Church in the next four to nine years?

Bible prophecy does not pinpoint precise dates -- or even the precise year -- of forecasted events.

During the late sixties, certain indications led me to envision the possibility -- never the certainty -- that the Work of the Philadelphia era of the Church might be completed by the first week in January, 1972. Never did I remotely believe that could be the time of Christ's return; the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord and other prophesied events had to occur after completion of our Work proclaiming Gospel Message, Law of God, repentance and fact of coming Kingdom of God. Nor did I set 1972 as definite date but only a possible date for completion of our commission. Yet some members totally misconstrued what I did say, and took it to mean definite date settings for end of this world and coming of Christ for the new World Tomorrow ... I never did, and do not now set dates -- even as to the year.

But there is an important prophecy in the tenth chapter of Revelation. The apostle John is recording what he saw revealed in a vision. An angel came with his hand lifted to heaven saying, "There should be time no longer" -- or, better translated, "There shall be no more delay." Then a voice from heaven told John to take and open a very small book in the hand of the angel, and eat it. In his mouth it was sweet as honey, but in his stomach very bitter. Then the voice said to John, God's apostle, "Thou must prophesy (preach or announce) again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, AND KINGS."

Now what is the TIME setting of this prophecy? It is sometime PRIOR to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, at which time Christ shall come. That is clear in verse 7. Also it is followed immediately by the three and a half year mission of the two witnesses. Their three and a half years BEGIN with the Great Tribulation. So the TIME of this prophecy is just shortly before the Work of the Philadelphia Church is finished. After that shall come the Great Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord, when there shall be supernatural disturbances striking the world with astonishing AWE in the sky.

The Laodicean era of the Church shall rise OUT OF, through and in the latter part of the Great Tribulation. They shall be IN it, and turn to God out of and during it (Revelation 7:9-15). They come out of the Great Tribulation and are converted as a result of it, which will open their eyes to the fact that what the Philadelphian Church proclaims was true, although now, while we proclaim it, they are not heeding.

So Revelation 10 shows that when our Work appeared to be close to finished and there should be no more delay in God's intervention, God did hold up world events, and I was commissioned to NOW go with the Kingdom Message to many KINGS, or national leaders, of many nations, speaking different languages. That is what, as I now look back in retrospect, I have been doing since 1970 and especially since 1972. So perhaps our Work would have been completed by 1972, except for this special commission.

Now where are we in the time sequence of prophecies? More and more it becomes apparent that we are right at, or even very shortly past, the event of Revelation 12:7. This is an event in the end time, after the Middle Ages, pictured in verse 6. Verse 7 reveals a fierce battle in heaven. Once again Satan and his demons have swooped up to attack God on His throne -- one last satanic try. Michael the archangel -- same rank as former Lucifer, now Satan -- is pictured with his angels fighting against Satan and his demons. As Lucifer and his angels tried to invade God's throne in heaven before the creation of man, so Satan has made this one last try to conquer GOD.

But Satan again was to lose this battle, and he and his demons were cast back to earth (verse 9). This was to occur just prior to the coming of Christ, the resurrection of saints to salvation and establishing the Kingdom of God on earth (verse 10). But

those of God's Church are at this time to overcome Satan by the blood of Christ and the Word of God (verse 11); but because Satan knows he now has but a short time to defeat God on earth through God's Church, even after he failed in the heavenly war with Michael (verse 12), he was immediately to persecute THIS CHURCH (verse 13).

Previously, from the time of my conversion and baptism I have suffered persecution from men, though inspired by Satan -- and so have many of you. But never before did Satan strike the CHURCH AS A BODY until the lawsuit launched against the Church January 3, 1979. It surely seems that fulfilled verse 13.

But our Work is not yet completed. This prophecy indicates it will be soon -- and apparently during the decade of the eighties, if not during President Reagan's administration -- though we cannot set definite dates. Yet WE SHOULD BE WARNED! We should realize our time for completion of Christ's Great Commission is now very short, and growing shorter daily.

The lawsuit apparently is behind us -- not definitely certain until June 30. But I have warned you all, Satan is now FURIOUS. He is mighty. He is powerful, next to the power of GOD. He is subtle, clever and can deceive and outwit the best of us. He is HARD AT WORK AGAINST THE WHOLE CHURCH RIGHT NOW in ways you know not. But the Church NEEDS YOUR PRAYERS -- even your most urgent, believing and faithful FASTING AND PRAYING!

Continue this prophecy. Next, when our Great Commission is in God's sight completed, we are to be taken -- symbolically flown on the two wings of a great eagle -- which could mean by a friendly government made friendly to us by my contacts with heads of so many governments these past 12 years -- we shall be taken to a place of protection from the Great Tribulation, which in itself is the furious wrath of a mad and infuriated Satan (verse 14). While we are in this place of safety three and a half years, the two witnesses shall be preaching to the whole world, protected from Satan. But Satan in his mad wrath will then make war with the REMNANT Church. This has to be the Laodicean era of the Church (verse 17).

Finally, what of the Laodicean era of God's Church? Remember, it, too, is GOD's Church -- having the commandments of God and Testimony or Word of Jesus (Revelation 12:17).

But that era of the Church is pictured in Matthew 25. Matthew 24 shows the sign Jesus gave prior to his coming to end the present world order, and the Great Tribulation, Day of the Lord and Second Coming.

Matthew 25 shows the time just before Christ shall return. It pictures the Laodicean Church as 10 virgins who took their lamps (their Bibles) and went forth to meet Christ at His coming. But five of them -- half of the Church -- took their lamps (Bibles) but without oil to light the lamps (having the Holy Spirit to enlighten their minds to UNDERSTAND the Bible). Some translations render this into English indicating they were losing the Holy Spirit, because of negligence, lack of prayer, fellowship with the brethren and with God and Christ and being overcome with materialistic and worldly interest. Are some of us like that, even now?

While they -- the backsliding half of the Church -- were trying to get back closer to God, the coming of Christ shall take place, and the door into God's Kingdom will be SHUT in their faces! WHAT A TERRIBLE AND AWFUL TRAGEDY! It could happen to you or me.

Brethren, we're living in more terrible, troublous times than you realize.

Today, as a new President is inaugurated in Washington, also comes the news that my dear friend, Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel, is being almost thrust out of office -- his government about to fall. There was to be a reelection in Israel in November, when Mr. Begin probably planned to retire anyway, because of serious heart trouble. But he has held his government in power only by the narrowest margin for the past several days, and now he has announced a new election in July instead of November. The last time I saw him, hardly two months ago, we parted with a bear hug. However, whoever is elected next prime minister is in all likelihood the man I also know well, and we still have many friends at and near the top in Israel. But DO NOT FOR A MOMENT GET TO THINKING TIME WILL JUST KEEP GOING ON AND ON. It won't! Satan knows how short time is. He is now striking at destroying THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE. I cannot reveal to you at the moment what Satan is up to now, BUT IT IS BIG, and we all need to be FASTING AND PRAYING as never before that God will restrain Satan.

I spoke to the Church at Honolulu on the way to Tokyo this trip. I talked privately with the Prime Minister, spoke the Gospel Message to a large banquet attended by 482 prestigious and high-ranking people of the nation in Tokyo, and also to a group of a hundred or more Japanese PLAIN TRUTH subscribers on the Sabbath afternoon we were there.

I have continued writing the full-page announcements for The WALL STREET JOURNAL while on the trip. Arriving in Manila, I was interviewed at a press conference at the airport on arrival. President Marcos has placed at my disposal a siren pilot car to go before my car wherever I go here, with motorcycle police also with sirens going along -- sometimes ahead of us, sometimes beside my car. We go through heavy traffic rapidly. Sabbath I spoke to more than 1,000 of our members here. Yesterday morning I spoke for some 30 to 40 minutes to the student body and faculty of the Adamson University in a special convoked assembly held for me. Tonight I am to be principal speaker at a huge banquet of 750 of the Philippines' most distinguished citizens and several ambassadors from other countries. There are other luncheon club speeches, press meetings and television interviews scheduled. This Saturday night will be the first night of the BIG CAMPAIGN here. Meetings are planned with President Marcos, the First Lady his wife, and a dinner with the entire cabinet of the government. God is using me. BUT TIME IS NOW VERY SHORT.

This Work is launched on the GREATEST AND MOST POWERFUL THRUST FORWARD IN ITS 47 YEARS. NEVER have I and the whole Work needed your prayers and continued EXTRA financial backing as now. When home I am recording two TV programs a week and also two radio half hours. Our TV crew is here, and the meetings here will be telecast over the U.S. We are launched on the greatest PUSH FORWARD ever. PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

With deep love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong