

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

May 25, 1969

Dear Brethren and Co-Heirs with Christ:

It is Sunday afternoon. The Feast of Firstfruits -- Day of Pentecost -- will arrive at sunset this evening. That is the annual Holy Day that pictures God's HOLY SPIRIT coming to DWELL within each of us -- begetting us as the very CHILDREN OF GOD -- making us the very FIRSTFRUITS of the Great Living FATHER'S begotten, and soon to be BORN divine Children!

We need to REALIZE what that means -- how WONDERFUL it is. We are the very LAST generation in THIS PRESENT WORLD. But Jesus said the LAST shall be FIRST. And the FIRST of this world are to be LAST in receiving the SONSHIP of the Living God. Those from Moses' day were called the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. We are called the CHILDREN OF GOD. They were the Congregation of Israel. WE the Church of God. Soon we shall become the KINGDOM of God.

We are even NOW the CHILDREN of GOD (I John 3:2), and what we soon SHALL be does not as yet APPEAR -- is not seen -- has not yet happened (same verse). But we know that, when the Living Jesus Christ does APPEAR, as He soon shall -- His face shining like the blazing, eye-blinding SUN, full strength -- WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.

Well, LISTEN Brethren! This, I believe, is EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT!

Some very dramatic things happened Friday -- day before yesterday. To me, and to my son Garner Ted Armstrong, and other top executives at Headquarters. IT WAS EXCITING, THRILLING, ELATING, EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT!

Friday morning we had resigned ourselves, regretfully, to having to give up building the hoped-for "HOUSE FOR GOD" -- at least for starting it this year -- probably permanently.

I want to give you all the FACTS.

In my letter of May 5, I explained how I had desired to build, at Pasadena Headquarters, an auditorium -- but one that, to us, would be more than just the college auditorium. It would be a HOUSE FOR GOD, at the place He has designated as His earthly HEADQUARTERS for the present.

Three thousand years ago, King David wanted to build a HOUSE FOR GOD, and God said "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." When I first wrote all our Brethren about it, five or six years ago, there was an immediate VERY ENTHUSIASTIC response. But then necessity gave other vitally needed buildings priority. We built the gymnasium, the Student Center, the Academic Center, the new men's student residence, and now, finally, the Hall of Administration.

Meanwhile, the architects continued preparing the plans for our HOUSE FOR GOD. They completed all working drawings last year. Late in the year we asked the architects for a firm cost-estimate, so we could seek financing for the construction. We did obtain commitments from insurance companies and banks for long-term loans in the amount of 50% of the architects' cost-estimate. Our own bank gave us a line of credit, unsecured, for 100% interim financing during construction. We had planned to break ground and commence construction about September, this year.

Then, about five weeks ago the architects shocked us with the news that they had made a terrible mistake in their cost-estimate. It was going to cost 40% to 50% more than the figure they had given us. That made it impossible to proceed this year -- or probably ANY year.

Before I tell you what happened Friday, let me tell you a little more about WHY we have wanted it so very much. When GOD'S people meet together on the Sabbath, WITH WHOM is our fellowship? It is much more than just with one another.

Listen to what God says: "That which we have seen and heard" (I John 1:3 -- John was one of the original Apostles, and he refers to Jesus Christ) "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Our fellowship on the Sabbath days is not only with ourselves alone. The Father and the Son Jesus Christ ARE THERE, in spirit, having fellowship with us.

Yet our Brethren, all around the world, have been meeting together with our God and our Saviour on the Sabbath days in hired halls. We have been willing to do this, in order that we could spend God's tithes and our offerings on GETTING OUT THE GOSPEL, instead of constructing church buildings and cathedrals like the world's churches.

When you stop to think of it, the world looks on "A CHURCH" as a building with a steeple on top of it -- or a cathedral. With them, the people go to the CHURCH. But with us, it has had to be THE CHURCH goes to the HIRED HALL.

We have been willing to forego having fine church buildings, so we could use the money in THE MOST POWERFUL GOSPEL WORK ever to go out to the world. Never in history has Christ's Gospel gone to SO MANY with such IMPACT and POWER. Of course, the world's churches have not preached CHRIST'S Gospel, but a different Gospel -- or one ABOUT Christ.

We know that in this, we have done what the Living Christ has directed us to do. Just as He told David that He had dwelt in tents, and not in a fine and costly Temple, without using the people's money for a HOUSE FOR HIM, so we know that has been His will in our day -- that is, to dwell with us when we meet on His Sabbaths in HIRED HALLS. But He said David did well in desiring to build A HOUSE FOR GOD. And apparently there was only THE ONE "HOUSE FOR GOD" in Solomon's day.

But, Brethren, even though we have been willing to give up having our own local church buildings FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE, God shows us, now, that we DO WELL in desiring to have ONE "HOUSE FOR GOD" at the present earthly Headquarters of HIS WORK -- one fine House we can all look to from around the world, WHERE GOD IS HONORED!

And, if we are willing, now, to make EXTRA sacrifice -- to give up some earthly thing that we may contribute EXTRA for HIS HOUSE -- then it appears now that God will open the way also that we may begin having local church buildings for our local church congregations. A great New York bank has offered to finance such local buildings, about ten at a time. We are not yet in financial position to go ahead with this, but WE CAN BE by next year, if we will PUT OUR HEARTS, NOW, IN PROCEEDING FIRST WITH THIS HOUSE FOR GOD AT HIS PRESENT HEADQUARTERS!

Of course we have not planned anything remotely as costly as the Temple God had Solomon build in answer to David's desire for such a House. On the other hand, we have felt it must be BETTER than ordinary -- a building fine enough to really honor the Great God.

I do not believe I mentioned in the former letter, but the city required that we build, in connection with this auditorium, a parking structure adjoining to accommodate a large number of cars. The architects felt that the only way they could provide the required number of spaces for cars was a full-block parking structure under the athletic running track.

The architects estimated the cost of this car-parking structure at two-and-a-half million dollars -- a price that seemed unreasonable to me, and which I never could understand. That had been figured in as a very sizeable portion of the cost of the HOUSE FOR GOD.

When we met in conference Friday morning with the architects I fully expected to have to give up ever constructing this building. Then the people in charge of our Buildings and Grounds Department came up with some new plans which the architects should have thought of long ago. They found four or five smaller areas around the campus which could be turned into parking space with-out spoiling the appearance of the campus. Adding them up, they accommodated more than the required parking space. And no cost, except just the pavement on the ground, which our own crew can do.

This eliminated a great big portion of the building cost. Then the architects, seeing we were going to drop all consideration of constructing the building, suggested that they thought they could reduce the cost of the building by perhaps 20% to 30% by making a few changes in plans that would not actually cheapen the building, or its appearance. IF they could do this, we could yet start construction this early autumn after all.

Brethren, I think God WANTS US TO BUILD HIS HOUSE! I think He moved to make this possible, just when it looked like we would have to give it up! Maybe He was just testing us to see whether we would be WILLING to give it up! And we were -- so now, IF you Brethren are willing to make some REAL SACRIFICES for it -- IF you want this more than some other things you may have wanted -- we can yet break ground and get this beautiful HOUSE FOR GOD under construction by perhaps this coming September.

BUT REMEMBER -- the fact we have this financing does not mean the insurance companies and banks are going to PAY FOR IT while we do nothing. Although our bank will ADVANCE on a short- term basis the progress payments, WE HAVE TO BIND OURSELVES TO MAKING DEFINITE HEAVY PAYMENTS EVERY MONTH! The 50% long-term insurance company loans will go to our bank at the time of completion of the building. But the other HALF of the cost must be paid back to them by us, on monthly payments that will pay it off in two or three years.

So, Brethren, in order that we may know whether to go ahead, I have to ask you once again to send in STATEMENTS OF INTENTION, of special, extra, additional offerings -- IN ADDITION TO TITHES and regular offerings for the Gospel WORK. I do not ask for any binding pledge. It is neither a pledge nor a vow. If the circumstances change, and you find you are not able to keep it up, YOU Will NOT BE BOUND. We will TRUST GOD to help you keep it up -- and if you are not able, God will provide someone else to pick up that part . But we DO NEED statements of intention to show the amount you believe, as of now, you will be able to send monthly for the next two years.

I ask you to PRAY about this! I know we can do it -- IF our hearts are in God's Work -- IF we are not dropping into the Laodicean condition -- IF we are not putting our minds on earthly things and throwing away our inheritance in THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Please pray over it, and let me know by return mail.

With love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong

P.S. With graduation coming on, and the rush to get away on the present trip to Jerusalem, with FIFTY of our students going there to work on the Archaeological Project for the summer, I did not get this letter completed. Have had to finish it here on the English campus. Am sending it today, June 5, to be mailed to you from Pasadena.