

# Statement of Beliefs of the *Continuing* Church of God

**Jesus said the grave would not prevail against His church. Do you know where a church that teaches all that Jesus taught is today?**

**Could a small and maligned group best represent the true Christian church today?**

**Would you be willing to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints” or would you prefer a counterfeit?**

**What are many beliefs of the original Christian church that the Continuing Church of God holds to, but that many who profess Christianity do not?**

**This booklet contains a summary of many of those beliefs as well as references to free literature that provides further documentation.**

**Appendix A, which is not part of the Statement, contains a ‘laying on of hands ‘apostolic succession’ list.**

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*Cover: Jesus said the true church would be a “little flock” (Luke 12:32); Front cover: CCOG logo. Back cover photo by Joyce Thiel. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural quotes are mostly taken from the New King James Version (Thomas Nelson, Copyright © 1997; used by permission) sometimes abbreviated as NKJV.*

# Statement of Beliefs of the *Continuing* Church of God

*Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3, NKJV), Let brotherly love (Philadelphia) continue (Hebrews 13:1)... continuing stedfastly in the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42 YLT).*

The purpose of this document is to list various beliefs of those who are part of the Philadelphia remnant of the Church of God, and most specifically the *Continuing* Church of God. And since Philadelphians are scattered among various organizations/locations, some Philadelphians may not hold all the beliefs in this booklet, but would agree with the bulk of them. Yet those in the *Continuing* Church of God hold to them all.

Another purpose of this Statement is to show those interested in original Christianity, what we in the *Continuing* Church of God teach.

The *Continuing* Church of God was declared and announced on 12/28/12, basically because on that date it became quite clear that no other COG still had the same commitment to Philadelphia era teachings nor enough of the “love of the truth.”

The total amount of the truth combined with real commitment to the truth (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15), along with doing the work (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20; John 6:29) God’s way (cf. Zechariah 4:6-7), with confirmation of His end time signs (e.g. Acts 2:17-18) separates the *Continuing* Church of God from groups that have many similar doctrines.

## Ephesus and Smyrna Era Teachings and Doctrines

The Book of Revelation is a prophetic book, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place” (Revelation 1:1)—therefore, the letters to the Churches of Revelation 2 & 3 need to be understood in a prophetic context. Also, several elements of those letters HAD to be for the future and not just for the time that John wrote the messages down.

Tracing the history of the Christian church through the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3 gives strong indications of who the descendants of the true church are today. This tracing provides information that demonstrates that the true Church of God (COG) is neither Protestant nor Eastern Orthodox nor Roman Catholic, but is truly the church that holds the same beliefs as the original apostles. And while most professing Christian faiths claim to have the faith of Jesus and His original apostles, many do not know what the original apostles or their faithful successors actually believed and taught. The Bible clearly shows that Jesus walks in the midst of these seven churches (Revelation 1:9-13), showing that somehow they represent His church for the church age. The fact that there are seven churches addressed and the number seven suggests completion, combined with the fact that the churches are listed in the same order as they would receive mail in the Roman times, is also consistent with the view that these churches were to represent the true church throughout the ages in a type of sequential order of predominance.

The first two “eras” of the Church of God (and the first two shown in the Book of Revelation) were those of Ephesus and Smyrna and lasted from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (c. 31) until about the mid-fifth century (whose followers were sometimes called Nazarenes by outsiders—the *Continuing* Church of God traces its history through the original Nazarenes of the first through fifth centuries). It is of historical interest to mention that the first several times the expression “catholic church” is used in the ancient literature, it is never related to Rome, but to the original apostolic “catholic church of God” in Smyrna. We assert we have succession from the original apostles through successors such as Polycarp of Smyrna to present, hence that we do best represent the original apostolic catholic Church of God. We not only believe we are the successors to the original apostolic faith (hence we believe in what has been called apostolic succession—though not the same way Greco-Roman Catholics view it), we believe we are the incorporated organization that best represents the Philadelphian remnant today (while recognizing that there are some ‘Philadelphian’ Christians scattered elsewhere, such as in other organizations).

Notice the following teachings of early Christianity that historical documents show were held during the times of the Ephesus and/or Smyrna eras—all of which are accepted by the *Continuing* Church of God and only a relatively few of which are practiced/taught/still accepted by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestants though early leaders considered as “saints” by them also held them):

**Baptism of Christians** was by immersion and did not include infants.

**The complete Bible** with the proper Old Testament and New Testament was relied on by the true Church in Asia Minor.

**A binitarian or Semi-Arian** view, that acknowledged the Holy Spirit, was held by the apostolic and post-apostolic true Christian leaders.

**Birthdays** were not celebrated by early Christians.

**Born-Again** meant being born at the resurrection, not at the time of conversion, which is when a spiritual begettal occurs.

**Celibacy** for Bishops/Presbyters/Elders was not a requirement.

**Christmas** was not known to be observed by any professing Christ prior to the third century, or ever by those holding to early teachings; December 25th did not come from the Bible.

**Church Governance** was properly hierarchical.

**Church services** were scripturally, not ritualistically, focused, and did not resemble modern “mass” nor “church celebrations” that many attend.

**Circumcision**, though not required, was long practiced by original Nazarene Christians.

**Confession** of sins was not made to priests and did not require penance.

**Deification of Christians** (which begins at the first resurrection) was taught by the early leaders of the Church.

**Duties of Elders/Pastors** were pastoral and theological, not predominantly sacramental—nor did they dress as many Greco-Roman-Protestant clergy now do.

**Easter** *per se* was not observed by the apostolic church.

The **Fall (and Spring) Holy Days** were observed by true early Christians.

The **Father** was considered to be God by all early professing Christians.

The True **Gospel** included the Kingdom of God and obedience to the law of God and was so understood by the faithful.

**Heaven** was not taught to be the reward of Christians.

The **Holy Spirit** was not referred to as God or as a person by any early true Christians.

**Hymns** were mainly psalms, not praises to Christ.

**Idols** were taught against and the cross was not adored.

**Immortality** of the soul for physical humans (not those once changed in the first resurrection) was not taught.

**Jesus** was considered to be God by the true Christians.

**The Kingdom of God** was preached. See also the free booklet, online in over 100 languages at ccog.org, titled in English: *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.

**Laying on of Hands** was practiced.

**Leavened Bread** was removed from the homes of early Christians when the Jews did the same.

**Lent** was not observed by the primitive church.

**Limbo** was not taught by the original church.

**Mary**, the mother of Jesus, was blessed (Luke 1:28) and called blessed (Luke 1:48), but was not prayed to, etc. by true early Christians.

**Military Service** was not for true early Christians.

**Millenarianism** (a literal thousand year reign of Christ on Earth, often called the millennium) was taught by the early Christians.

**Monasticism** was unheard of in the early Christian church.

**Passover** was kept annually on the 14th of Nisan/Abib after sunset (so early during the night) by apostolic and second century Christians in Asia Minor.

**Pentecost** was kept on Sunday by certain Jews and was observed then by professing Christians.

**Purgatory** was not taught by the original apostolic church.

The **Resurrection** of the dead was taught by all early Christians

The **Sabbath** was observed on Saturday by the apostolic and post-apostolic Church.

**Salvation** was believed to be offered to the chosen now by the early Church, with others being called later, though not all who taught that (or other doctrines) practiced “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). A free book, available online at ccog.org, with document details is titled: *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God’s plan of salvation.*

God’s **Six Thousand Year Plan** for humankind to rule itself was believed by early professors of Christ.

**Sunday** was not observed by the apostolic and original post-apostolic Christians.

The **Ten Commandments** were observed by the apostolic and true post-apostolic Christians—and in the order that the Church of God claims they are in. Properly keeping the Ten Commandments helps build character so that Christians can better serve and make eternity better.

**Tithes and Offerings** were given to support the ministry, the churches, the needy, and evangelical travels and proclamation.

**Tradition** had some impact on the second century Christians, but was never supposed to supersede the Bible.

The **Trinity** was not a word used to describe the Godhead by the apostolic or second century Christians, though a certain threeness for the future was acknowledged.

**Unclean Meats** were eaten by the early allegorists, but not by true Christians.

**The Virgin Birth** was acknowledged by all true ante-Nicene Christians.

The *Continuing* Church of God continues to teach all the above as they were held by Jesus’ original apostles and their truly faithful early followers.

The *Continuing* Church of God also specifically traces its history from the original apostles like Peter, Paul, and John through their faithful descendants like Polycarp, Polycrates, and certain other known early leaders/bishops in Asia Minor until the early-mid third century, certain known leaders/bishops until around 135 A.D. in Jerusalem, and until around 211 A.D. leaders/bishops in Antioch like Serapion. While Peter played a predominant role among the apostles, after his death, that leadership role would have passed to another apostle (John) and not to an elder who may have lived in Rome.

Historical and scriptural references supporting those beliefs are in two free books, online at ccog.org, titled: *Beliefs of the Original Catholic Church* and *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism*.

## What are Philadelphia era teachings?

While the Church of God always held to certain beliefs, over time, some truths were lost and the Sardis era of the COG lost many (cf. Revelation 3:1-3).

The following are some truths restored to the Philadelphia era of the COG that Sardis at least partially lost:

1. **True Gospel** (A booklet of related interest is: *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.)
2. **Purpose of God** (A booklet of related interest is: *The MYSTERY of GOD's PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*)
3. **God's Plan through the Holy Days** (A booklet of related interest is: *Should You Observe God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*)
4. **Proper Church Government**
5. **Who and What is God?**
6. **What and Why is Man?** (A free booklet of related interest, online at ccog.org, is: *The MYSTERY of GOD's PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*)
7. **Spirit in Man**
8. **Firstfruits In this Age** (A free booklet of related interest, online at ccog.org, is: *Is God Calling You?*)
9. **Knowledge of What the Millennium Truly Is** (A free booklet of related interest, online at ccog.org, is: *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.)
10. **Truth About the Holy Spirit** (A free book that includes a lot of related information, online at ccog.org, would be: *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism*.)
11. **Christians are Begotten Now**
12. **Born-Again at the Resurrection**
13. **Identity of Physical Israel**
14. **How the Identity of Israel Opens Up Understanding of Bible Prophecy**
15. **Second and Third Tithes**

16. **Identity of Babylon and Her Daughters** (A free book that has some information on that, which is online at ccog.org, would be: *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism.*)

17. **Satan has Deceived the Whole World** (A free related online book would be: *The MYSTERY of GOD's PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*)

18. **We Are to Be Separate** (A free related online booklet would be: *Where is the True Christian Church Today?*; see also the free online book: *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism*)

Without going into more detail here, the second century writings of Theophilus of Antioch, for example, demonstrate that Christians believed that they were to be deified and born again at the resurrection (Theophilus of Antioch. To Autolycus, Book 2, Chapter XV) and other early writings do demonstrate that there were those who professed Christ after the death of the original apostles that seemed to hold to those “restored truths.” Judeo-Christians of the first few centuries A.D. seemed to understand at least something of the identity of physical Israel and tried to get the gospel message to them (e.g. James 1:1).

Basically, Philadelphians, as opposed to others who claim COG ties, truly put their top priority on Philadelphia love by supporting the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14 and related proclamation scriptures (like Matthew 28:19-20), while recognizing that God works through ordained leaders and has tended to have had an evangelist-ranked or higher leader of the Philadelphia era, and still does though only a remnant of that era is around today. The Apostle Peter stated that there would be dreams and prophets in the last days (Acts 2:17-18) and God has been providing such in the CCOG.

## Some Detailed Beliefs

The *Continuing* Church of God, which attempts to represent the most faithful remnant of the Philadelphia portion of the Church of God, bases its beliefs on the Holy Bible. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, our doctrines, practices, policies and traditions have their roots in the original Jerusalem church (Acts 2, c. 30s A.D.). These continued on through the faithful in Antioch & Asia Minor in the first (such as the Apostles Peter, Paul, and John) and second centuries A.D. (such leaders as Polycarp, Thraseas, Serapion, and Polycrates). Many of the followers of those faithful leaders went throughout the world establishing congregations through the ages.

Jesus taught that the true church would be a “little flock” (Luke 12:32), hated by the world (Matthew 10:22), would continue (Matthew 16:18), and be persecuted (Matthew 10:23). He also taught only a few would find the way to eternal life in this age (Matthew 7:14; 20:16). The Apostle Jude indicates that the number of saints was relatively small (Jude 14), while the Apostle Paul called the small group a “remnant” (Romans 11:5).

The Bible further shows that the true church could not remain headquartered in any single continuing city throughout centuries of its history (Hebrews 13:14; cf. Matthew 10:23). Understanding the truth about the churches of the second and third chapters of Revelation and how the Church of God itself has continued helps identify the true Church of God in its various locations.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Philadelphia era of the true Church (Revelation 3:7-13) was raised up. This “era” was primarily represented by the old Radio Church of God which was renamed the Worldwide Church of

God under the leadership of the late Herbert W. Armstrong. While that “era” apparently ended upon his death, a faithful Philadelphia remnant continues (cf. Hebrews 13:1, literal) that now carries that mantle and pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15), and will exist until the end of the church age (cf. Revelation 3:10-11; 12:14-17a). The *Continuing Church of God*, with its world headquarters in the Five Cities region of California (specifically now, the City of Grover Beach), leads the Philadelphian remnant and works to feed the flock around the world in the 21st century.

## **THE HOLY BIBLE**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and was finalized by the Apostle John (see also the free online book: *Who Gave the World the Bible?*). As commonly divided, it is a collection of 66 books, with 39 from the Hebrew scriptures (The Old Testament Canon) and 27 from the Greek Scriptures (The New Testament Canon). Scripture is inspired in thought and word and contains knowledge of what is needed for salvation (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Matthew 4:4; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Scripture is truth (John 17:17) and is infallible and inerrant in its original manuscripts (John 10:35).

## **GOD IS SPIRIT, GOD IS LOVE**

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). God’s ways are “higher” than those of humankind (Isaiah 55:9).

“God is love” (1 John 4:8,18). The Holy Spirit is inherent in the Father and the Son, and emanates from Them throughout the entire universe (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:24). God’s entire plan for humankind is based upon love.

God made all that He did out of love so eternity would be better (see also the free online book: *The MYSTERY of GOD’s PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*).

## **THE GODHEAD**

Christians believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus (the Word and the Son of God) and the Father are both God. The Father and the Son comprise the “Godhead” (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). Scripture shows that there is one God (Mark 12:29; John 17:11; 1 Corinthians 8:4). That one God is an eternal divine Family originally consisting of two, God the Father and the Word (Jesus) (Genesis 1:26; Ephesians 2:19; 3:14-15; John 1:1,14), with faithful children to be added through begetting by the Holy Spirit (John 17:10-11; Hebrews 2:10-11, 1 John 3:1-2; Ephesians 3:14-15) to become as Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29), who is God (John 1:1-3,14, 20:28-29; Colossians 2:2,9). More on Jesus can be found in the free online book: *Proof Jesus is the Messiah*.

The Holy Spirit emanates from God (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7; Jeremiah 23:24) and is given to all who repent of their sins and are baptized (Acts 2:38-39). The Father and Son work through the Holy Spirit. Though not a separate person in the theological sense, the Holy Spirit is the power (Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:6-7) which helps all believers overcome evil (Romans 12:21; Revelation 2:26-27) and will be led to attain eternal life (Philippians 3:12; Romans 6:23). The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey (Acts 5:32) after they have properly repented and been baptized (Acts 2:38-39). The early original Christians had what has been called a “binitarian” view of the Godhead (see also the free online book: *Beliefs of the Original Catholic Church*.)



## **BIBLICAL GOVERNANCE**

Jesus taught, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28) while the Apostle Paul taught “the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3), hence the top authority in the universe is God, the Father. Now “Christ is head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23) and “the Word” (John 1:14), thus no human religious leader is authorized to directly contradict the word of God (cf. Mark 12:13-27; Acts 5:29).

A hierarchical form of governance is taught in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12:28) and is shown to be best for the Church (Ephesians 4:11-16). The basic order being that under Jesus are apostles, then prophets, then evangelists, then pastors, then teachers (Ephesians 4:11). The apostles were confirmed by signs that followed them (Mark 16:20) and there have been signs (Acts 2:17-18) that have confirmed the *Continuing Church of God*.

Since the time of Pentecost in Acts (Acts 2:1-4), ministers have been appointed through the laying on of hands from those who had the Holy Spirit, beginning with the apostles (Acts 9:17; 2 Timothy 1:6) and then through others who had hands laid upon them to be part of the ministry. While Christians should normally obey their spiritual leaders in the Lord (Hebrews 13:7,17), these leaders need to uphold biblical standards (1 Timothy 3:1-12; Hebrews 13:17) and govern as the type of servants Christ would have them be (Matthew 20:25-28).

## **CHRISTIANS ARE TO ABIDE IN HIS LOVE**

Love is what God (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8,18), His commandments (Matthew 22:37-40), and His way of life (James 2:8-11; 1 John 2:5, 5:3) are all about. Christians keep His commandments and abide in His love (John 15:9-10; 1 John 2:3-6). “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:3-6). Christians are to “imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). And in addition to keeping the laws of God and practicing the loving way of give, Christians also ought to regularly pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17), study the Bible (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15), engage in biblical meditation (Philippians 4:8), and, those who are physically able, sometimes fast (Matthew 6:16-17). Christians are to practice love (Matthew 22:36-40) and be merciful (Luke 6:36).

The reality is that the Bible and its message is truly one about love—love towards God and love towards others (Mark 12:30-31). Despite flaws that all humans have, always remember that love is truly what is important (1 Corinthians 13:13; see also the free books, online at ccog.org: *The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast* and *The MYSTERY of GOD’s PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*).

## **SIN AND THE LAW OF GOD**

The Bible teaches: “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, KJV). Jesus kept and taught the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4). In the, New Testament through various teachings (e.g. Matthew 5:17-48, 12:12), Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that He “would exalt the law and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). In New Testament times and throughout history, true Christians have striven to obey the law of God, including keeping the Ten Commandments (see also the free online book:

*The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast*). And this is prophesied to continue into the future, as the Apostle John was inspired to write: “the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

## **FAITH, REPENTANCE, ACCEPTING OF JESUS, JUSTIFICATION, RECONCILIATION, AND BAPTISM**

Other than being drawn/called by God (John 6:44; Matthew 22:14; see also the booklet: *Is God Calling You?*), the first clear step in becoming a Christian is to hear (which can include reading as opposed to literal hearing) as “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Then one must believe in Jesus with all one’s heart “the Way” He is taught about in the word of God (Acts 8:37, 24:14). Thus, only those capable of developing faith from understanding the word of God can properly be considered to be baptized as truly Christian (though, young children of at least one Christian parent, however, are designated as “holy” per 1 Corinthians 7:14).

Accepting the message of Jesus leads to “repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1) which means to change our past ways of living that are contrary to God’s law (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11), baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), and the “laying on of hands” (Hebrews 6:2; cf. Acts 8:14-17) so “you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). God’s Holy Spirit is given to those who “obey Him” (Acts 5:32).

Christians are “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9) and “reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

Baptism is with water (cf. John 3:23). The Greek word *bapto* literally means “cover wholly with fluid.” The full immersion at baptism helps picture our total surrender to God (Romans 6:3-13). The New Testament shows that the Holy Spirit was given to the baptized through the laying on of the hands of Christ’s ministers, such as apostles or elders (Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6) or others properly designated by them to do so (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14-17; John 4:2).

God is reproducing Himself through His people (see also the free online book: *The MYSTERY of GOD’s PLAN: Why Did God Create Anything? Why Did God Make You?*). Upon receiving the Holy Spirit, Christians are begotten by God (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 5:1), then after a period of spiritual growth/gestation (cf. 2 Peter 3:18), Christians will literally be born again (John 3:5-7) when changed at the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:49-54) as Christ was (Romans 1:4-5).

## **TRUE CHRISTIANS**

Having the “Spirit of God” (also called the “Spirit of Christ”) differentiates Christians from non-Christians (Romans 8:9). That Spirit is only given to those that “obey Him” (Acts 5:32). Many who think that they are Christian, but practice lawlessness, are not Christ’s and do not abide in His love (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:24-28; John 15:9-10; 1 John 2:6).

## **CHRIST’S GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God was the message that Jesus (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43; Matt 9:35) and His disciples preached (e.g. Luke 9:1-6; Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:30-31; 2 Peter 1:10-11). This “good news” includes teaching of repentance, the forgiveness of sins through Christ’s sacrifice/crucifixion, love and

God's way of life, and of the soon-coming Kingdom and government of God (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2). Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom of God must now be preached and it reveals the means by which Christians are to be ruling members of His Kingdom (Matthew 24:14; Acts 8:12; 17:7; 28:30-31; Revelation 2:26-27). "His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:23-24).

This "good news" includes the truth that God will ultimately *offer* salvation to all (Luke 3:6; John 3:16-17; 12:32,47; Isaiah 6:9-11) (see also the free online books: *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God* and *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation*).

We in the *Continuing* Church of God are currently leading the final phase of the work of God which lasts until Jesus returns.

### **SALVATION IS BY THE NAME OF JESUS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH AND HE WILL RETURN**

"Jesus Christ of Nazareth ... for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:10,12). "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). This is God's gift by grace (favor) through faith in Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Romans 5:10). Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation for those who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

God is merciful (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 136:1-26; Luke 6:36) and wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), yet because of various difficulties, few will find salvation in this age (Matthew 7:14; Luke 13:23-24; Romans 11:6-7; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Upon repentance and baptism, God justifies repentant Christians from their past sins. Christians then begin an ongoing process of "being saved" as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18) and having Christ live in us (Galatians 2:20). Salvation for those Christians in this age will be complete at the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:50-54); "Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). All will have a fair chance of being saved (see also the free online books: *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation* and *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism*).

### **LOVE AND SALVATION FOR ALL RACES AND PEOPLES**

Racial hatred is wrong. While there can be racial differences, the Bible does not teach that one race is superior in His eyes to any other. The Bible commands all humankind to love their neighbors as themselves (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; Acts 17:24-29). Jesus came to bring joy to all peoples (Luke 2:10). The Bible shows that salvation is now freely offered to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 10:8-13; cf. Joel 2:32) and that God intends to save people "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9). Christian love should be shown to people of all ethnicities (Luke 10:30-37; Romans 13:10); and continue in true doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16). "Our God is the God of salvation" (Psalm 68:20) "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6; see also the free online book: *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation*).

## BIBLICAL NAME OF THE CHURCH

The predominant biblical name of the true Church in the New Testament is “Church of God.” Variations of this expression are clearly stated in the singular and plural forms in twelve different places in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16,22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5,15). Throughout Christian history, the true church has normally used a version of the expression “Church of God” (or “Churches of Christ,” cf. Romans 16:16) though often with another term, like a geographic region (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2) or another word, with it (1 Timothy 3:15). Jesus said that Christians would be kept in His Father’s name (John 17:12), which most often is simply “God” in the New Testament, hence “Church of God.”

The most faithful Church of God in the end times in the Book of Revelation is the Philadelphian one, but since only a remnant of that is left, the term Philadelphian remnant Church of God is an appropriate description of the portion of the Church of God that holds fast to Philadelphian era teachings. Since the true Church of God has continued from the time of the original apostles, and we strive to be faithful Philadelphians, the name *Continuing Church of God* helps convey that.

## CHURCH HISTORY

Jesus taught that His followers in the Church Age would be a “little flock” (Luke 12:32), or remnant according to the Apostle Paul (Romans 11:5). The *Continuing Church of God* traces its history from the Apostolic Church in the Book of Acts (the beginning of the Ephesus era) to the present through many locations. It is the true Church of God and its doctrines (Jude 3; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Galatians 2:5; Colossians 1:21-23; Acts 2:42, 14:21-22) not a city, that continues until Jesus returns (Matthew 10:23; 16:17-18, 28:19-20; Revelation chapters 2 & 3). For much more detail, please check out the free online book: *Continuing History of the Church of God*.

## THE SABBATH, THE MILLENNIUM, AND THE HOLY DAYS

**The Sabbath** is on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11, 31:15, 34:21; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Hebrews 4:4,9). The Bible shows that Jesus Christ (Luke 4:16; 6:6; 13:10; Mark 6:2), the original apostles (Acts 17:2; 18:4), and those trying to be faithful in the early Church (Acts 17:2-4) observed God’s commanded Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 4:9). Jesus declared that He was the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28); then in that sense, the real “Lord’s day” is the Sabbath which falls on the seventh day of the week. The Sabbath has long been a sign between God and His people (Exodus 31:13). Speaking of the seventh day (Hebrews 4:4), the New Testament teaches that there remains “a Sabbath-rest the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9, NIV). The Sabbath also helps picture the millennial reign of Jesus (Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 20:4-6).

Jesus Christ and His saints will reign on the earth for a thousand years (Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6).

The Bible teaches that this millennial kingdom will be wonderful (Isaiah 2:1-4, 9:7, 11:1-10, 35:1-9; Ezekiel 34:21-29, Micah 4:1-4; Acts 3:19-21) and that the saints will then reign with Jesus (Revelation 20:4-6). Satan the devil will be banished during this time (Revelation 20:1-6), and it is a time of rest, rebuilding, and abundance.

The Sabbath itself is observed weekly from sunset on the day commonly called Friday until sunset on the day commonly called Saturday.

Though at least part of how early Christians observed them changed from how the children of Israel observed God's Holy Days and Sabbath (e.g. Jesus added footwashing to Passover and animal sacrifices are no longer needed), the early Christians continued to observe the festivals and holy days listed in the Hebrew scriptures in Leviticus 23, but with a New Testament understanding.

**Passover** helps picture the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who scripture shows came to be the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus observed Passover annually (Matthew 26:18; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:14-15; 22:15), died on Passover (Luke 22:15), and was sacrificed for us as "indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus made changes to the Passover including adding the symbols of unleavened bread and wine (Matthew 26:17, 26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) as well as the cleansing practice of footwashing (John 13:1-17). It is kept annually (cf. Exodus 13:10; Leviticus 23:5). Keeping Passover proclaims Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11:27) which reconciles us to God (Romans 5:10). Jesus gave His life for our salvation (John 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:5-11) and His death teaches us that Christians are not to have sin reign over our mortal bodies (Romans 6:3-14).

**The Days of Unleavened Bread**, which come immediately after Passover, picture being cleansed from sin by the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus (cf. 2 Peter 1:9-11). They also picture that the leaven of hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness need to be purged (Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:6-13). The Apostle Paul was inspired to write, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

**Pentecost**, described in the Hebrew scriptures as "the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits" (Exodus 23:16), pictures the start of the New Testament Church (Acts 2:1-4). Pentecost also helps picture that Christians are a type of firstfruits of God's harvest (Romans 8:23; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; James 1:18), though "the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37-38). "These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb" (Revelation 14:4-5).

**The Feast of Trumpets** helps picture the blowing of the seven trumpets in the Book of Revelation announcing events taking place during the 'Day of the Lord' (Revelation 8,9,11:15-18; 15:1-8; 16:1-21; 19:1-21). The last trumpet signals the resurrection of the saints and the second coming of Jesus, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Every seven years, a year of land-rest and debt release begins with this Holy Day (Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

**The Day of Atonement**, called "the Fast" in the New Testament (Acts 27:9), helps show our own weaknesses and need to be closer to God (Isaiah 58:5,11). This day shows that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for our sins now (1 John 4:9-10; cf. Leviticus 16:15-16) and those that will be called in the "age to come" (Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; cf. Acts 3:21). It also helps picture that Satan has a role in the sins of humankind and that he will be punished by being bound for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3; cf. Leviticus 16:20-26; Isaiah 14:12-16).

**The Feast of Tabernacles** (Leviticus 23:33-39) which shows a time of abundance, helps picture the millennial kingdom reign (Revelation 20:4-6) of Jesus Christ and His saints on the earth (Zechariah 14:6-21; Matthew 13:1-30; Luke 12:32; John 7:6-14; Acts 17:31; Revelation 5:10, 11:15; 12:9). This future paradise, following the near total destruction that humanity will have brought upon itself through its activities and the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord (Matthew 24:21-31), will help show humanity the advantages of God's way of life. Every seven years, the law is to be read during this festival (Deuteronomy 31:10-13).

**The Last Great Day** helps picture that all who ever lived will have a real opportunity for salvation (John 7:37-38; Isaiah 52:10,13-15; 65:20; Luke 3:6)—an opportunity most will accept (John 7:37-39; Romans 11:25-26; Ezekiel 37:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; see also the free online book: *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation*). The New Testament name comes from the Apostle John who wrote, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38).

History provides references that the early followers of Christ, such as the Gentile Polycarp, observed the Sabbath on the seventh day and the other biblical holy days and festivals (see also the free online booklet: *Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*).

By observing the days that the Bible enjoins, Christians can come to understand more deeply God's plan of salvation, and some of the steps taken toward salvation. The biblical festivals show that Christ was truly sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7) and Christians are to live without the leaven of hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness (Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:6-13). The biblical festivals also help show that while some are predestined to be called in this Church Age (Ephesians 1:4-12; Acts 2:1-47), there is an age to come (Acts 3:21; Matthew 12:32), and the destiny of all others is to be presented an opportunity for salvation on the Last Great Day (John 7:37-38; 12:47-48; Romans 10:11-21; see also the free book: *Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation*).

## **TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

The Bible teaches that "And all the tithe of the land ... is the Lord's" (Leviticus 27:30). The most faithful Christians followed Jesus' admonition to tithe (Matthew 23:23) and the Apostle Paul's to give offerings (1 Corinthians 9:1-14). While in the time of the Old Testament, tithes were given to the Levitical priesthood, in the Church Age, this has changed to those representing Christ's ministry (cf. Hebrews 7:1-12). Through tithes and offerings, Christians serve God by supporting the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:9), supporting the ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18), the Church (2 Corinthians 9:6-14), attendance at His festivals (Deuteronomy 14:22-26; Acts 18:21), administrative needs of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14), and the care of the needy (Deuteronomy 26:12-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14; Galatians 2:10; James 1:27).

## **DEATH, THREE RESURRECTIONS, AND THREE JUDGMENTS**

"And as it is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27) "for all have sinned...and the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23,6:23).

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

The Bible actually teaches that there are three future resurrections. The first for the saints at the time of Jesus’ return (Revelation 20:4-6; John 5:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53), the second for others (Revelation 20:5a,11-12; John 5:25; cf. Matthew 11:23-24), and the third for the incorrigibly wicked and those who die at the end of the hundred years (Revelation 20:13b-15; Isaiah 65:20-23).

The Bible teaches at least three judgments and that “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). In this life, Christians are judged (1 Peter 4:17). A second judgment is the first part of the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-12) which comes after the millennial reign of Jesus and His saints (Revelation 20:4-6). Later, in conjunction with it, one hundred years later (Isaiah 65:20) comes the final judgment including the dead in the sea and Death and Hades (Revelation 20:13-14), and anyone not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire for what is called the second death (Revelation 20:15; Malachi 4:1-3; Psalm 37:38). Those whose names are found in the Book of Life will receive immortality and be part of God’s family (Revelation 3:5, 21:22-27; Psalm 40:7-8; cf. Ephesians 3:14-15; Romans 8:9).

## **HUMANKIND’S DESTINY**

The Bible shows that Jesus became human (Philippians 2:7) so that humans could become His brethren in the family of God (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 3:14-19). Jesus Himself prayed, “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17:22-23).

But for Christians called and who endure to the end in this age, they will also be rewarded with important roles in God’s kingdom (John 14:1-3; Revelation 3:21, 5:10, 20:4-6), which will be based on this earth (Matthew 5:5; Revelation 2:26-27; 5:10; Daniel 2:44).

Our individual role is to help make eternity better, to give love, each in our own unique way (see also the free online book: *The MYSTERY of GOD’S PLAN Why Did God Create Anything? Why did God make you?*).

## **GREAT TRIBULATION, PROTECTION, DAY OF THE LORD, AND JESUS’ RETURN**

Jesus taught, “there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22). The Bible shows that God promises to protect the faithful Philadelphians who “gather together” (Zephaniah 2:1-3; Joel 2:16-17; Jeremiah 4:5-6) from this “hour of trial” (Revelation 3:7-10), but this promise is not made to all Christians (Revelation 12:14-17; cf. Luke 21:36).

There is a ‘Day of the Lord’ which lasts about (cf. Matthew 24:22) one year (Isaiah 34:8) and precedes the return of Jesus Christ (cf. Joel 2:30-31; Matthew 24:29-31) and the establishment of the millennial phase of the Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15, 20:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

What could be considered the final ‘Day of the Lord’ involves the destruction of elements (2 Peter 3:10-12) as well as the wicked in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

## **THE FINAL ANTICHRIST IS NOT THE BEAST OF THE SEA**

The Bible shows that the final Antichrist is a religious leader as opposed to a primarily political one according to the only verses in scripture that use the expression “Antichrist” (2 John 7, 1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22, and 1 John 4:3). The Bible specifically teaches “false prophets have gone out into the world ... this is the spirit of the Antichrist” (1 John 4:1,3) and that he will suggest that he had the true Christian faith (cf. 1 John 2:18-22).

The final Antichrist is the two-horned Beast of Revelation 13:11-17 who is called “the false prophet” in Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. The other Beast in Revelation 13, the “beast of the sea” of Revelation 13:1-10 is the final King of the North of Daniel 11, and though he will be opposed to Christ and thus is anti-Christ, he is not “the” Antichrist that the Apostle John warned of (though John does warn against him in multiple scriptures).

## **NOT OF THIS WORLD**

Jesus taught, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). John the Baptist taught, “Do violence to no man” (Luke 3:14, KJV). Early Christians understood “the gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15) prohibited them from engaging in violent military behavior. Historically, those of the Church of God have considered military service as wrong for its members. From Revolutionary War times to the Civil War and to present, countries like the United States have tended to have had provisions to exempt Church of God members and congregants from military participation because of conscientious objections. Early Christians did not participate in military warfare nor watch violent sports.

The Apostle Paul taught “we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:20; see also the free online book: *Christians: Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, Biblical instructions on living as a Christian*). The Apostle Peter taught that God’s people were “a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out” (1 Peter 2:9). The Bible also teaches that this world has been deceived by Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9) and that God’s people need to be separate from the world (John 15:19; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4; Revelation 18:4). Since a Christian is God’s ambassador and this responsibility is our duty above any arising from human relationships (Matthew 10:37; Acts 4:18-20; 5:26-31), it is our normal religious practice to not participate in voting for national elections nor participate in jury duty, nor do we voluntarily join the military. Historically, the faithful Church of God has long taught that its members should not participate in secular juries and secular politics.

However, Christians are expected to listen to (1 Peter 2:13-17) and pray for (1 Timothy 2:1-3) governmental authorities and to pay their taxes (Matthew 22:17-21). Yet, if there is a conflict between the laws of men and the laws of God, “We must obey God rather than any human authority” (Acts 5:29, NLT).

## **FALLING AWAY**

Since non-Christians are not part of the faith, they do not ‘fall away’ in the sense that the Apostle Paul wrote about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Timothy 4:1 (“depart from the faith”), and other places in scripture.

## **BIBLICAL MARRIAGE**



The Bible only condones sexual relations in marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18-7:5). Furthermore, Jesus taught that marriage is one between one natural man and one natural woman (Mark 10:6-9) and is intended to be for life (Matthew 19:3-9; cf. 2 Corinthians 7:39).

In the Bible, other sexual relations are condemned (e.g. Exodus 20:14; Romans 1:24-32; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; 27:20-23), as is transvestism (Deuteronomy 22:5), and improper attraction (e.g. Exodus 20:17; Leviticus 18:6-23; 20:15-16; Deuteronomy 27:20-23; Matthew 5:27-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). People practicing, or desiring to practice, homosexuality, bisexuality, incest, adultery, fornication, transvestism, bestiality, or other forms of sexual immorality are not welcome to attend church services or otherwise be considered as members of the *Continuing* Church of God without true repentance consistent with biblical teachings (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

The New Testament shows that marriage helps picture the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-32). God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and in the New Testament, divorce is only allowed in very limited circumstances (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

The Bible also teaches: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-16; cf. 1 Corinthians 7:39), thus the *Continuing* Church of God opposes marriage between true Christians and unbelievers (with the biblical exception of Exodus 22:16).

## **THE MISSION**

The Church’s mission is to proclaim, promote, and educate about Christ’s Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14) and all that implies, including leading the final phase of the work.

Here are seven specific parts of the mission of the *Continuing* Church of God:

1. To preach the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14) and salvation through Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; John 6:29; Acts 4:10,12; Romans 1:13) including supporting Romans 11:25 related to the fulness of the Gentiles, and continue in doctrine (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 4:16).
2. To preach the end-time biblical prophetic warnings, including about the coming Great Tribulation, to the descendants of Jacob (e.g. Ezekiel 3-6 and 33; Matthew 24:4-51) and others in this age as we strive to lead the final phase of the work.
3. To preach Philadelphian love (Revelation 3:7-12; James 2:8; John 13:35; Hebrews 13:1), feed the flock (Matthew 28:19-20), promote Philadelphian unity (Joel 1:14, 2:15-16; Zephaniah 2:1-3; Jeremiah 4:5-6; Revelation 3:7-10, 12:14-17), and encourage all to build character through growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).
4. To be examples (Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:7) and educated witnesses (Matthew 24:14; 2 Timothy 2:15; Daniel 11:33) to the world in general, as well as other Christians (Daniel 11:32-33).
5. To learn and practice the words and commands of Jesus in all our dealings with others (John 13:35; 15:14).

6. To restore and teach more of the truths of original Christianity (Jude 3; Matthew 17:11; Acts 18:26).

7. To teach that Christians should be led by the Holy Spirit and pursue love, mercy, judgment, faith, justice, and the other gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:1-14:1; Matthew 23:23; Galatians 5:22-25).

Teaching the truth and love of the word of God to the world in general and those called in this age in particular (Matthew 28:19-20) is the mission of the *Continuing* Church of God.

## Appendix A; Laying on of Hands Apostolic Succession List

Does the *Continuing Church of God* (CCOG) have apostolic succession?

Yes.

We are the faithful descendants of the apostolic ‘See of Ephesus’ which is sometimes referred to as the ‘See of Smyrna.’ We in the CCOG are NOT Protestant, Roman Catholic, nor Eastern Orthodox Catholic. We assert that we are the best 21st century representation of the original apostolic catholic church (see also the free online books: *Hope of Salvation: How the Continuing Church of God Differs from Protestantism* and *Beliefs of the Original Catholic Church*).

We declare that we are the true spiritual descendants of the apostles. We assert that such descent is not dependent upon a bishop to bishop transfer, but a true holding of teachings in a little flock—Luke 12:32—along with a laying on of hands succession. While ordination is one aspect of spiritual authority, the church’s authority comes not so much from apostolic succession as it does from the word of God. In other words, the ministry is to be followed as it follows Jesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1) and what the Bible teaches (e.g. 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

A laying on of hands succession means that, although there were unfaithful bishops/pastors throughout history, **we in the CCOG declare that our members and leaders have an unbroken laying on of hands connection back to the original apostles who received God’s Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4.** We also have the ‘last days signs’ of Acts 2:17-18, which we assert shows God’s confirmation of our church (cf. Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).

While Jesus is perfect (Hebrews 2:10) and He is the true head of the church (Colossians 1:18), unlike the Church of Rome, **we do not claim infallibility of any of our human leaders nor any of their writings.** Nor do we view our ‘succession lists’ the same way that those in the Roman or Eastern Orthodox Catholic churches view theirs. Plus, we acknowledge that there can be more than one accurate succession list as there were many apostles and branches.

While recognizing that certain historical records are sparse, and many old Church of God documents (including lists) were destroyed, we have put together a tentative list as the details of several leaders as well as dates are not firmly established. While the first two centuries and last four centuries are reasonably firm, there is speculation related to several of the names as we have less information about leaders during the “church in the wilderness” (Revelation 12:6) time c. 380-1640 A.D. To a major degree, the records for that period are mainly reports from those who opposed many COG doctrines.

### ***Continuing Church of God Apostolic Laying on of Hands Succession List***

c. 31 – c. 64-68 Apostle Peter

c. 67 – c. 98-108 Apostle John

c. 100 – c. 155-157 Polycarp of Smyrna

c. 157 – c. 160 Thraseas of Eumenia  
c. 160 – c. 167 Sagaris of Laodicea  
c. 167 – c. 170 Papirius of Smyrna  
c. 170 – c. 180 Melito of Sardis  
c. 180 – c. 200 Polycrates of Ephesus  
c. 200 – c. 210 Apollonius of Ephesus  
c. 210 – c. 220 Camerius of Smyrna  
c. 220 – c. 254 Nepos of Arsinoe  
c. 254 – c. 275 Unnamed Antiochian(s) or possibly Dorotheus  
c. 275 – 312 Lucian of Antioch  
c. 313 – 380 Unnamed Antiochian (s)  
c. 380 – c. 470 Unnamed Nazarenes  
c. 470 – c. 500 Constantine of Antioch and Aushin  
c. 500 – c. 645 Unnamed 'Paulicians'  
c. 645 – c. 650 Leader with New Testament from Syria  
c. 650 – c. 684 Constantine of Mananali (Silvanus)  
c. 684 – c. 696 Simeon  
c. 697 – c. 702 Sergius  
c. 702 – c. 717 Paul the Armenian  
c. 717 – c. 746 Gegnesius  
c. 746 – c. 782 Joseph (Epaphroditus)  
c. 783 – c. 800 Unnamed Paulician(s)  
c. 801 – c. 835 Sergius (Tychicus)  
c. 836 – c. 919 Unnamed Paulicians  
c. 920 – c. 950 Basil  
c. 951 – c. 980 Jeremiah  
1000s Sergius (27 years)  
c. 1110 – 1140 Peter DeBruy (Pierre De Bruy)  
1140 – 1155 Arnold of Brescia  
1156 – 1181 Nicetas  
1181 – 1205 Peter Waldo  
1205 – 1224 Arnold Hot  
1224 – 1300 Unnamed Sabbatarian Waldensians  
c. 1310 – 1322 Walter the Lollard  
1322 – c. 1335 Raymond the Lollard  
c. 1335 – c. 1460 Unnamed Sabbatarian Waldensians  
c. 1460 – 1492 Anthony Ferrar  
1492 – 1525 Stefano Carlino or Unnamed Sabbatarian Waldenesians  
1526 – 1528 Moravian Sabbatarian Anabaptist 'traveling minister'  
1529 – 1540 Andreas Fischer  
c. 1540 – 1563 Michiel Rovillart of Arras  
1560 – 1579 Francis David  
1580 – 1587 Unnamed Sabbatarian  
1588 – 1600 Andreas Eossi

1600 – 1616 Simon Péchi  
1617 – 1619 John Traske  
1620 – 1652 John Pecke  
1652 – 1654 Peter Chamberlen  
1654 – 1661 John James  
1661 – 1678 William Saller/Seller  
1678 – 1711 Henry Soursby  
1712 or 1716 – 1743 Thomas Lucas  
1712 – 1716 John Maxson  
1716 – 1718 John Maxson, Jr.  
1718 – 1737 Joseph Crandall  
1737 – 1748 Joseph Maxson  
1748 – 1778 John Maxson  
1779 – 1797 Nathan Rogers  
1797 – 1820 James Dunn  
1820 – 1850 John Cottrell or 1823-1850 Peter Davis  
1839 or 1850 – 1871 Asa Bee or unnamed Sabbatarian  
1871 – 1900 A.C. Long  
1900 – 1905 William C. Long  
1905 – 1921 S.W. Mentzer  
1921 – 1933 Andrew N. Dugger or 1922 – 1933 John S. Stanford  
1933 – 1986 Herbert W. Armstrong  
1986 – 2010 Dibar Apartian  
2011 – present Bob Thiel

*More details on many of these leaders can be found in other CCOG literature.*

It should be mentioned that we in the CCOG assert that some 'records' about individuals and groups from enemies were not accurate. Various other historians agree:

Enemies have sought to confound, so there might be imputed to the Waldenses any evil which had been brought home to the Albigenses and these last having been convicted of enormous errors in doctrines and practice, that the condemnation might embrace the Waldenses as well. (Trench RC. Lectures on Medieval Church History: Being the Substance of Lectures Delivered at Queen's College, London. Macmillan, 1877, p. 246)

It is only from the enemies of God's Church that we have scanty, malicious records of God's people, who were defined as "heretics" and "enemies of the church." These records attribute beliefs to God's people which they never held. Heretics and the true Church are often called by the same names. For centuries Catholic writers mention small remnants of the true Church within the bounds of the Roman Empire. Sometimes they were individuals, sometimes scattered families, and especially in the Near East there were still a few local congregations preaching the gospel and keeping the commandments. (Hoeh H. A True History of the True Church. Radio Church of God, 1959, pp. 18-19)

The “Near East” means places like Asia Minor, Antioch, and Armenia. To “confound” means to condemn and confuse, in this case, with misinformation. The pagans and Jews did this related to early Christians (e.g. Acts 25:7-8), but sadly this happened with later Christians as well. So, it should not come as a surprise that less than flattering statements, or even claimed doctrinal issues, related to true Christian leaders has occurred throughout the church age. Hence, no we do not believe all the negative things about relatively old and new leaders on that list.

# *Continuing Church of God*

The USA office of the *Continuing Church of God* is located at: 1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, California, 93433 USA. We have supporters all around the world, and in all inhabited continents (all except Antarctica).

## **Continuing Church of God Website Information**

**CCOG.ORG** The main website for the *Continuing Church of God*.

**CCOG.ASIA** Asian-focused website, with multiple Asian languages.

**CCOG.IN** India-focused website, with some Indian languages.

**CCOG.EU** European-focused website, with multiple European languages.

**CCOG.NZ** Website targeted towards New Zealand.

**CCOGAFRICA.ORG** Website targeted towards Africa.

**CCOGCANADA.CA** Website targeted towards Canada.

**CDLIDD.ES** This is a totally Spanish language website.

**CG7.ORG** This is a website for those interested in the Sabbath and churches that observe the seventh day Sabbath.

**PNIND.PH** Philippines-focused website, with some Tagalog.

## **Radio & YouTube Video Channels**

**BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET** Bible News Prophecy online radio.

**Bible News Prophecy** channel. YouTube sermonettes.

**CCOGAfrica** channel. YouTube video messages from Africa.

**CCOG Animations** Animated messages on YouTube.

**CDLIDDsermones** channel. YouTube messages in Spanish.

**ContinuingCOG** channel. YouTube video sermons.

## **News and History Websites**

**CHURCHHISTORYBOOK.COM** Church history website.

**COGWRITER.COM** News, history, and prophecy website.