

The purpose of this article is to identify our church of God era and remind readers we need to turn to God and away from unrepentant ministers.

Mr Herbert W. Armstrong taught that the Church of God consists of seven distinct consecutive church eras. For example, in the section, *Seven Church Eras* of chapter 6, *Mystery of the Church* on page 283 of his book, *Mystery of the Ages*, he wrote in reference to Revelation chapters 2 and 3, “*They are a series of remarkable prophecies, by which the future of the true Church was foretold in outline form, from the day it began on Pentecost, A.D. 31, until the Second Coming of Christ*”.

Mr Armstrong continued, “*The history of the Church would fall into seven distinct eras – each with its own strengths and weaknesses and its own special trials and problems.*”

He added, “*It was like a relay race – in which the baton is passed from runner to runner, each one doing his part, until the finish line is reached.*”

This is consistent with the teaching of our Lord Jesus in the first three chapters of Revelation that He would transfer God’s Lamp (Candlestick) from one church era to the next as each church era in turn failed. Paper Q9 at my Internet home page, shows that there are indeed seven distinct and consecutive church eras despite many now disputing this.

It was readily assumed that we were in the better era of Philadelphia and that this was in effect infallible because it was led from

1934 by Mr Herbert W. Armstrong who it was claimed, restored all truth that had become lost over preceding church eras.

Philadelphia literally means Brotherly Love. Yet soon after Mr Armstrong’s 1986 death the wheels came off under his successor, the late Mr Joseph W Tkach and the ministry began splintering into hundreds of churches. These ministers were once brothers in the same faith but their inability to get along with one another should cause us to question whether Mr Armstrong had indeed led from 1934 Philadelphia.

Although Revelation 3:14-22 depicts Laodicea as the worst of the seven Church of God eras, Laodicea is nevertheless one of God’s seven church eras where for a time God’s Lamp will shine brightly. Indeed Section 6.3 of my paper P1, *Laodicea’s Lamp!* shows that Revelation 3:14-22 aptly describes the former WCG!

Let us remember that Laodicea is God’s seventh and final church era. It is God’s and not Satan’s church era! Also Laodicea can only begin when Philadelphia is over and our Lord has transferred God’s Lamp to Laodicea.

There are no parallel active church eras. God’s Lamp shines into Satan’s dark world from only one place at the time and not from two or more places. At anyone time there can be only one true church led by God’s human messenger, else there would be confusion and God is not the Author of Confusion (1 Cor 14:33).

Each church era, including Philadelphia, will fail in turn because no

human messenger is without fault.

Ministers should only call another church Laodicea, when they sincerely believe our Lord has transferred God’s Lamp from Philadelphia to Laodicea. When ministers use the name Laodicea disdainfully to denigrate another church, they are misusing the name of God’s seventh and final church era.

Read in Mark 10:2-9 our Lord’s criticism of Moses’ rejection of God’s *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage (No-D & No-R) Law*.

When the Pharisees told Jesus in Mark chapter 10, “⁴ *Moses suffered us to write a bill of divorcement, and put her away*”, Jesus corrected them, “⁵ ... *For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.* ⁶ *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female:* ⁷ *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.* ⁸ *And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain but one flesh.* ⁹ *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”

Let no one deny our Lord criticized Moses for rejecting God’s *No-D & No-R Law*, which dates back to Eden (Gen 2:24) and so *predates* both OT Israel and the NT Church. It seems Moses had given Israel man’s *D & R licence* to prevent Israel once more rebelling against God for the hardness of their heart.

Recognize our Lord’s criticism of Moses applies also to Mr Armstrong’s 1974 rejection of God’s *No-D & No-R law!*

Through this 1974 rejection Mr Armstrong showed he was lukewarm

towards God’s pivotal Garden of Eden *No-D & No-R Law* which had come down to him from the Apostolic church.

In 1977 Mr Armstrong compounded this sin by marrying another man’s wife, whose husband was still alive. Not only was this contrary to God’s Law for priests (Lev 21:7, 14) but also contrary Paul’s plain teaching, “*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord*” (1 Cor 7:39).

Paper P3, *The Garden of Eden No-Divorce & No-Remarriage Law*, explains that a consummated biblical lawful marriages remains an *unbreakable covenant for life*.

Mr Armstrong’s 1974 rejection of God’s *No-D & No-R law* and replacing this with Moses’s *D & R licence* shows he was from 1934 the lukewarm leader of our era of Laodicea!

Paper P1, *Laodicea’s Lamp!*, essays that Mr Armstrong was spewed from our Lord’s mouth in 1979 for his 1974 and 1977 sins. Like Exodus Israel, we hardened our heart and now we refuse to admit we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (*D & R!*) and in need of eyesalve (Rev 3:17-18).

Is there even one minister willing to repent of our 1974 sin or are they too busy claiming only they lead Philadelphia?

Read papers P1, P3, Q9 and A1 at www.rightly-dividing.net or request these in writing from: Henk Jens, PO Box 121, Belmore, 2192, NSW, Australia.