

Christian COG "Philadelphia Fast"--Sabbath January 5, 2008

Sent by Lori Johnson (King William, Virginia)

And he said, "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name saying I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: do ye not therefore after them." — Luke 21:8

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ!

From scripture it is clear that during the end times many will profess the name of Christ while seeking personal gain, power, and followers of men. This has been evident to us throughout history, even before the age of television and radio, but in modern times we have often seen these media tools used to benefit those about whom Christ warned us.

God's Word gives no indication that *any* church would be exempt from such deception. This letter finds you now to bear witness of such a situation which has been going on for almost two years, tearing families apart, and many of us believe it is our duty as Christians to do something about it.

Background:

Many of those receiving this letter already know about the **Philadelphia Church of God** (PCG), which is being ministered by a man named Gerald Flurry.

On December 10, 2005, Mr. Flurry decreed that his church members should entirely shun *anyone* — including even their own closest family members — who had previously been disfellowshipped from "the Church" and/or judged as "marked", by a **PCG** church leader of appropriate authority and ranking -- basically, to shun all those who are deemed *sinners* by the **PCG's own** judgment!

Mr. Flurry's mandate can be found here: <http://www.cogwriter.com/PCGNon-contactPolicy-PGRDecember2005.pdf.pdf>

Based on the context where Mr. Flurry mentions "the Church", it is plain that he is speaking of the **Worldwide Church of God**, which split in the 80's and from which the **PCG** was born (among many other Sabbatarian offshoot congregations).

However, he apparently believes that the **Philadelphia COG alone** is a continuation of "God's True Church", while he refers to all other sister congregations as "Laodicean groups". In so doing he is claiming for his church, and his church *alone*, the praises of the angel of God (Christ Himself) in Revelation 3 for the church in Philadelphia, while condemning all other congregations to the judgment reserved for the Laodicean church.

Apparently, the **PCG** decree was somehow intended to encourage all those in other sister churches to leave their church and join "the [True] Church" which he considers to be **PCG alone**.

It is noteworthy to mention that in *all* of the praises and warnings to the seven churches found in Revelation — which were *physical* churches in Asia at the time, *not* some kind of metaphor for "church eras" — the message was to repent of their ongoing sins *and* hold fast to the truth of Christ. Not one of these messages suggests *in the least* for Christians to leave their church and join the Philadelphia church.

We believe that God's true Church is a spiritual one, not a man-made physical organization. Therefore, no physical church of God can rightly assume this title — *including* the **"Philadelphia COG"** of today. Church is like a hospital for sinners, and we're *all* sick and in need of healing and salvation through the blood of Christ.

As a result of this mandate, there have been reported many horror stories, for unfortunately many within Mr. Flurry's flock have fallen for this false teaching hook, line, and sinker.

Examples of Family Situations:

One example which comes to mind is of an unbaptized teen boy in Cincinnati, OH, who upon seeking baptism was warned by his aging grandmother that she would never speak to him again if he was not baptized into the **Philadelphia COG**, thus negatively affecting his baptism decisions which could be potentially detrimental to his walk with Christ during his adolescent years.

His parents had already been rejected by her, but she requested to have the grandchildren visit. The grandkids decided they would not see their grandmother since she had rejected their father and mother.

In Lexington, KY, a lady with terminal cancer and a member of **PCG** was told by the doctors she had but a few months to live, which proved to be correct. During her last months of life, her own son was not allowed to visit his dying mother. She petitioned Gerald Flurry, who eventually gave his consent for the mother to receive her son on her deathbed.

These are only two examples, but there are many people within the family of Christ among various congregations who have been and continue to be witness to several other such tragedies.

God's will is to *grow* His family. However, this decree from Flurry to the **PCG** congregation is only serving to cause destruction in God's family — this surely cannot be the will of God!

So, what can we as brothers & sisters in Christ do about this to help? Many have been praying about the situation, but now we feel we need to do something more.

Recently, one of our brethren in our local church congregation whose family has been persecuted by these events, announced that his entire family was partaking in a fast from food and water for this cause.

We talked about it and came to the conclusion that we would like to participate in a global day of fasting as a result of this continued persecution of God's children.

Action:

Therefore, we have decided to hold a special **Christian COG "Philadelphia Fast" on Jan 5**, the first Sabbath of 2008.

In this fast we pray in the name of Christ, that the Father will intervene in order to touch the hearts and minds of Gerald Flurry along with his **PCG** leadership and members unto repentance and healing, so as to put an end to this teaching which is plaguing the growth of God's family — God's *spiritual* Church.

Furthermore, through this fast, we ask that God will guide the various COG congregations into the "unity of the faith" by removing man-made organizational boundaries and stumbling blocks, most noteworthy, the pitfall of following after a man rather than Christ.

We pray that God's Spirit will move you to join us in this special Christian COG "Philadelphia Fast". PLEASE share this message with everyone you know who is in the COG faith, without regard to "post-Worldwide" man-made organizational "denominations".

Put it on your calendar *now* so you won't forget! It would be good to again send this announcement letter one week before the fast date as a reminder, perhaps by Jan 1. Also, don't forget those you know who do not use email — there's always snail mail!

With love and in Christ YHWH,
Fellowship of the WORD