

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD

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Dear members and co-workers with Christ,

What a change the past month has brought! Given the chaotic circumstances in the world today, it seems most everyone can recognize that *these are not normal times*.

In fact, as we have declared for years, we are living through the LAST HOUR of this present evil world! (1 John 2:18; Revised Standard Version).

You can't help but sorrow for this world that lacks hope, purpose and direction. For God's people, however, these times give us great anticipation and hope, for we know what lies just ahead: Jesus Christ's return! There could be *no better news* than what we have to share with this world! How refreshing to have answers, and to be able to offer encouragement. Thank God for His truth – for His hope and gospel message.

In *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W. Armstrong addressed a timeless question: the value of human life. "Human life is at once of infinitesimally less value than [the people of this world] suppose, and at the same time of supremely greater potential than they know," he wrote. He said human worth "is grossly overestimated in its own reality, and astoundingly undervalued in its supreme potential. The truth indeed is staggering." How relevant that truth is as leaders take radical, nation-destroying measures to preserve "even just one life"!

Today our televisions continually broadcast experts offering predictions and prescriptions. Yet there is so much uncertainty and so many unknowns in what they say! As this world's governments scramble to help people, they are making some catastrophic mistakes. Stimulus checks – underwritten by money that doesn't really exist – will provide many people temporary relief. But the governments of man cannot continue to generate assistance without end, and so much of what they are doing will bring *punishing* long-term costs they are not even considering!

"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). All around us, mankind is cursed by plagues of disease, leadership failures, a spirit of fear and a crushing sense of vulnerability.

THAT IS NOT GOD'S WAY OF LIFE! God's Spirit is one of courage, wisdom, balance, hope and godly confidence!

Jude, the brother of Christ, prophesied of these stern days – yet he described them as days of *opportunity*! Jude 18 says, "How that they told you there should be mockers in THE LAST TIME, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." This is for our day. The Greek word translated *time* means "measure of moments." We are in the *last hour*, but this describes a time frame of LESS THAN an hour – a time of minutes, or moments.

That word *time* can also mean “TIME OF OPPORTUNITIES.” Though this is the *worst* time ever, it is perhaps the *BEST time ever* for OPPORTUNITIES—just before the Second Coming!

This world is seized with fear and uncertainty as it battles coronavirus. God’s perspective is that this crisis gives His Work fantastic OPPORTUNITIES! I will talk more about those opportunities later in this letter.

Mankind yearns for life, but they only see the *physical*. They are plagued by fear over physical suffering, sickness and death.

It is ironic that so many in this world quickly submitted to civil authorities (to officials who *don’t know the way* out of this crisis) and surrendered their freedoms to shelter in place. Yet mankind stubbornly REFUSES to submit and surrender to their Creator!

What a paradox! People of virtually every nationality, race and sex are willing to hide in their homes, cease productive work and exercise, distance themselves from each other, and just *hope* that scientists, politicians or other “professionals” will guide them out of this trouble. (Now, there certainly is a biblical time to quarantine, as outlined in Leviticus 13 and 14.) Yet THEY PUSH AWAY OUR LOVING GOD, who promises protection, deliverance, confidence, health, productivity and togetherness!

Honestly, do you believe there are humanly devised solutions to the broken economy, the political disruptions taking place, the mighty blows that are toppling individual freedoms? We all know better. The media, the politicians and academic experts may well be sincere and well meaning, but they have no answers.

But GOD DOES! And God’s Work does—and God commands us to *share those answers* with this world!

GOD HAS NOT BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY THE CORONAVIRUS. AND NEITHER HAS HIS CHURCH.

In Ezekiel 33, God explains how to *escape* suffering: through REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S LAW! *Why do you choose death?* God asks Israel (verse 11). Why suffer hopelessness, fear and anxiety? We were NOT created to suffer. Suffering is a consequence of *disobedience to God*.

Under Satan’s influence, mankind remains stubbornly resistant to God. Mankind has some difficult lessons to learn. Today’s war with a virus is typical of what the future holds. Christ says these are only “the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8). The impact of coronavirus is a sign of EVEN WORSE EVENTS ahead! Because mankind continues to sin, he will continue to struggle and suffer.

In the end, all civilization, all life, would die if not for the saving hand of our Creator! (verse 22). But that saving hand *will come!* Christ will return as a triumphant King, armed with God’s power. He will imprison THE ONE truly responsible for this world’s suffering and death—Satan the devil—and introduce the change this planet needs.

This is the hope we have in our hearts. This is what guides us through uncertain times. We have the answers from God!

For decades – and for centuries and millennia before that – God has prepared us for THIS TIME when we can share those answers, and provide godly leadership and direction to all who will accept it. And we are well suited to reach the world with this message!

In the 20th century, He sent an end-time Elijah to restore all things and to preach the gospel of God to the world as a witness (Matthew 17:10-11; 24:14). Mr. Armstrong did that work during a time of relative prosperity. At the time of his death, the world was in much better shape than we find it today. Still, God said His Church in the Philadelphia era would have “a little strength” (Revelation 3:8) compared to the vast power Christ will use personally to transform this world!

God also warned of a satanic influence within His Church that would seek to cast His truth to the ground (Daniel 8:12). Yet He prophesied that Mr. Armstrong would *restrain* that destructive force while he was alive (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8). But then Mr. Armstrong died. That set in motion all the prophecies to be fulfilled during the Laodicean era. Very quickly, some 95 percent of God’s people turned away and embraced this evil physical world – and the Church’s “little strength” was eviscerated!

Now, some 34 years later – with many of those prophecies being fulfilled or already passed – we find ourselves challenged as never before. Yet my job, and yours in support of this commission, is to PROPHECY AGAIN (Revelation 10:11).

At the time of Mr. Armstrong’s death, Satan and his demons were cast down and confined to Earth (Revelation 12:9). The world hasn’t been the same since – and it is increasingly obvious! News headlines highlight expanded demon activity. How remarkable that even secular, deceived individuals and news outlets can see the satanic impact on this world in crisis. But they too are deceived about what is *really* going on.

Amid this coronavirus trial, you see Satan’s evil influence amplified. The demons are complicating *everything* taking place around us. Satan is a liar and murderer. He loves fear and anxiety. He has moved this world to new heights of uncertainty. He has ground businesses, religions, nations and lives to a halt. People are desperate.

THE WORLD NEEDS US! Many people are looking for answers and, it appears, more willing to listen to the truth of God. Again, what a time of OPPORTUNITY for God’s Work!

Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Perfect love is obedience to the law of God, faith in God, and a commitment to let Christ live in and through us. *This Work* is capable of using perfect love to do even greater works than Christ Himself! (John 14:12).

The traffic to our websites has risen dramatically. February and March each set all-time records by large margins. Since the end of January, we have seen a 132 percent increase in new users compared to last year, and a 233 percent increase in traffic from search engines. Several articles about the coronavirus have become our *all-time most popular* articles, and people are spending an *average* of six to seven minutes on each of these articles.

Our *pcg.church* website received 57 percent more sessions and twice as many new users during this period. Our *Trumpet Brief* e-mail service had a 152 percent increase in subscribers in March. The *Trumpet* YouTube channel had a 64 percent boost in views.

On the Sabbath of March 28, I delivered a live address at *theTrumpet.com* that was viewed by thousands more people than attend PCG services. Many of you watched. But the numbers of those who watched and listened exceeded even our co-worker base. Clearly there are many people out there yearning for hope and direction!

Thousands watched. Will they *respond*?

In my Personal Appearance Campaigns and on my TV programs, I have encouraged people to step out in faith and ACT. We need more people to ACT on God's message of hope – to repent of sins and be reconciled to God, then to LIVE through the power of Christ!

Many won't respond like they know they should, but that does not dissuade us. We must still proclaim God's truth as a witness.

I am encouraged by the potential audience we have built over the years. We reached that audience despite little to no advertising for that online program. It gives a *taste* of the potential audience we can reach.

Now is the time, as Jude prophesied, for OPPORTUNITY! We have a real opportunity to reach a world that is searching for answers.

There is only one true Church doing God's Work. Only one Church is in regular communication with God and receiving His new revelation. Only one Church is focused on prophesying again, sharing the good news of the coming World Tomorrow.

I want to see God's Work EXPAND right now – to provide more answers through more television programs, more literature and a stronger effort to reach those who really need the truth!

I have been greatly encouraged by the positive statistics – more calls, more renewals, more website visits and more people tuning in to our *live* messages. We have had growing attendance at our PACs. More people are attending with us. More are tuning in to our programming and reading our literature. More are renewing their subscriptions to our periodicals. But still there are not enough!

Christ told His disciples to *pray* that God would add laborers to the Work (Matthew 9:38). That is one way we can all boost the effectiveness of this Work: through intense, sincere, intercessory prayer (James 5:16). (We have a powerful little book that will enhance your prayer life if you study and apply it. Please get your copy of *How to Pray* and restudy it, or request a copy and we will rush one to you.)

We must double-down in our devotion to this Work. We have been called to prepare this world for a radical change. Our personal attention to this calling IS yielding results.

God's gospel is THE SOLUTION for mankind. If we deepen our understanding of that message, then we will be ready to lead this world out of their helplessness and misery. Romans 8 tells us that all creation is waiting on you and me! We must make ourselves ready to love, to teach by example, to complement the efforts of our Husband Jesus Christ and help bring this wayward world to their loving Father!

Are you up to the challenge? Are you ready to fight? We all have yearned for these days, and *now they are vividly before us!* NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. Today is a time to demonstrate faith AND works (James 2:14-24). This is our hour!

The world has never needed God's Church like it does today, and that need will only strengthen! Sadly, the coronavirus is not the greatest challenge this generation will face. Because of human sin and rebellion, times are prophesied to grow FAR WORSE!

But God gave this world hope through His Son, and through His Church. You and I have the gospel, and we are commanded to share it, to promote it, and to live it!

So how can you personally help? What can you do?

Those are great questions we need to ask – and we need God to answer for us. As you can imagine, some who financially back and support this Work are unable to do so now because of the current economic conditions.

Of course, God's financial laws of tithing and generous support aren't suspended in times of crisis. But brilliantly, God commands us to tithe on our "increase" (e.g. Deuteronomy 14:22). So if at this time, you have NO INCREASE – for example, if you lost your job or have some other hardship that impacts your income – God doesn't expect you to tithe. And we must be responsible and never give *beyond* what we are able.

For those who can, however, now is the time for sacrifice while others may temporarily be limited. Can you sacrifice so others can have hope? Amid fear and anxiety, what is the value of hope, of leadership and answers to life's most important questions? The value is beyond money, beyond any sacrifice we can make. Still, God challenges us to GIVE – and promises to respond in ways we cannot even fathom (Malachi 3:10-11).

Beyond directly supporting the Work through finances and prayer, we also must *individually apply ourselves* spiritually.

All the quarantine measures have prohibited our meeting together for Church services for the past three Sabbaths. It is unclear when that restriction will be lifted. This really hurts in one sense, yet here too we must view the situation as a TIME OF OPPORTUNITIES.

Now is *not* the time to cower in our homes in isolation. Now is the time to pour ourselves into our relationship with God, to commit ourselves to His education and way of life. Take advantage of the man-enforced isolation and expand your relationship with God! Use this opportunity to deepen your personal interaction with the God Family through prayer and study. Occasionally fast. Spiritually grow!

The PCG produces an abundance of materials to educate you in the truth. Visit theTrumpet.com and pcg.church to fill yourself with this profound education. Listen to KPCG.fm.

The Apostle Paul cautioned the Church to not forsake our fellowship together (Hebrews 10:25). This is one area where Satan has struck a real blow. Fellowship with other Spirit-begotten Christians is a crucial part of our spiritual nourishment. Joel Hilliker, managing editor of the *Philadelphia Trumpet* magazine, wrote a short article about the

need to fellowship during this period of lockdown—even through phone calls or other technology if need be (“Amid Coronavirus Lockdown: Keep Fellowshiping!” – find it on *pcg.church*). Please read that article and follow the admonition to stay in touch with the Family of God!

Satan cannot stop God, but he does attack those who are neglecting to build their relationship with God and His Family. Resist Satan, and he will flee (James 4:7).

We must not allow Satan to slow our efforts. Rather we must use this time to EXPAND God’s Work. God commands us to get out and warn, to prophesy again, to supply HOPE to this world! We are this world’s ONLY source of hope and understanding.

WILL YOU JOIN ME DURING THIS TIME OF PROPHESED CRISIS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES GOD PUTS BEFORE HIS FAITHFUL ELECT?

Be strong. Draw close to God. And KNOW that beyond this present evil world is a time of unprecedented hope and accomplishment! In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul said our human minds are too limited to even *comprehend* the future God has prepared for us—but we CAN comprehend it with the Spirit of God!

I have *never been more excited in all my life* for the proof of God’s fulfilled prophecy that shows how CLOSE we are to Christ’s return. May God speed that day and all the beauty and wonder it brings!

With love, in Jesus’s name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald Flurry". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Gerald" and "Flurry" being significantly larger and more decorative than the rest of the letters.

Gerald Flurry