

Philadelphia Church of God

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Dear brethren and co-workers in Christ,

THE MIDDLE EAST HAS EXPLODED IN THE WORST WARFARE IT HAS SEEN IN DECADES!

As I write, Israel has just launched a large ground invasion into Lebanon to try to stop Hezbollah's relentless rocket attacks. So far, all of its air strikes and other efforts have not solved the problem. Stratfor says that the ferocity of Hezbollah's rocket attacks, and how well coordinated they are, "indicates a phenomenally intact command-and-control network—something the Israeli airstrikes should have destroyed." So even though most of the world is condemning Israel for being TOO STRONG in its retaliation, it hasn't been STRONG ENOUGH to even *slow down the assault* of this one terrorist group against the cities in northern Israel!

Many nations are pressing for a cease-fire—but so far the violence shows no sign of slowing down. A big part of the reason is that *nobody is facing reality* and HOLDING IRAN TO ACCOUNT for starting this war! UNLEASHING HEZBOLLAH WAS AN IRANIAN ACT OF WAR. Hezbollah is controlled and funded by Iran. Tehran has made clear its intentions to eliminate Israel and secure Jerusalem. At some point, you can be sure that it will open a third front on Jerusalem itself. Hezbollah may already have plans to do that.

DO YOU REALIZE, DEAR BRETHREN AND CO-WORKERS, THAT YOU HAVE A STRONG CONNECTION TO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL RIGHT NOW? Let me explain what I mean.

In my last letter to you I gave the exciting news about our drive to begin personal appearance campaigns—what I believe is a fulfillment of Christ's prophecy in Matthew 10:23: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." God impressed on my mind that we needed to begin these campaigns very urgently. We have successfully completed two of them, and I am preparing for the next, in Los Angeles, this coming weekend.

I briefly spoke about the campaigns at our ministerial conference this past June. My lectures focused on the building of the second temple, which is written of in the biblical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah. In the midst of that temple reconstruction anciently, there was a long delay—most commentaries say for 16 years. In many ways, the Philadelphia Church of God is doing the work of rebuilding the spiritual temple after it was destroyed in the Laodicean era. We are in the midst of our 16th year. Based on those parallels, I told the ministers that this summer could be an explosive summer for God's Work. The two biggest examples I gave were the fact that my son's book, *Raising the Ruins*, is coming out (I plan to write you more about that soon, in a future letter), and that God is urging us to begin personal appearance campaigns again.

Then, to the ministers, I said: "I'll tell you what I think might even be more important than all of those—in some ways, as far as getting people moved toward God: Well, if all of that is going to happen this summer, *maybe God sees something*

on the horizon that could be rather stunning, SOME THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO UNFOLD IN BIBLE PROPHECY, SOME CURSES ON ISRAEL, who knows what? But I'll tell you this, I just saw, almost suddenly, that Christ wanted me somehow to shift into those campaigns. Because you never really know when to do that except God guides you. You don't know when to do it. Well, why does He want it done now? *Is there something coming that might really resonate with those people when we start telling them about these prophecies?* And surely, surely we know it's all about over. ... But do you think with all this happening, there might be a possibility of SOME PRETTY DRAMATIC EVENTS THIS SUMMER? SOME AMAZING THINGS HAPPENING IN THIS WORLD?"

There is nothing like disasters to get people asking the serious, important questions. When times are good, people relax in a comfortable fog. But when God begins to send curses, that can quickly get people's attention! That is why I said it was very possible that—considering how urgent God was in wanting us to begin those campaigns—we could see dramatic events happen this summer that would focus people's attention on God's message.

Obviously, I said that several weeks before WAR BROKE OUT in the Middle East. Looking at the violent events we see today, you would have to say that what I said at the ministerial conference was an UNDERSTATEMENT.

I BELIEVE GOD IS GETTING US GEARED UP FOR SOME POWERFUL PROPHECIES BEING FULFILLED VERY FAST! Time in this world is quickly running out.

Iran's war against Israel is not the only serious CURSE we have seen in the past couple of months. We are seeing unprecedented weather problems—horrible heat waves, droughts and wildfires in some areas, severe flooding in other areas. "More than 60 percent of the United States now has abnormally dry or drought conditions, stretching from Georgia to Arizona and across the north through the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin ..." (ABC News, July 29). Federal Agriculture Department meteorologist in Washington Brad Rippey said, "The 1999 to 2006 drought ranks only behind the 1930s and the 1950s. It's the third-worse drought on record—period."

There have also been major crises preceding each of our campaigns in the cities we have visited. Philadelphia experienced tremendous flooding just before we traveled there for our first campaign. In Washington, D.C., where a majority of the new people to that campaign were from, there had been 14 murders in 13 days. Just before our campaign in Chicago, a subway train derailed during rush hour, sending 120 people to the hospital. As I prepare to go to Los Angeles this weekend, California is suffering from a devastating rise in temperatures that has resulted in the deaths of over 130 people and thousands of livestock. "The stretch of 100-plus degree scorches that descended on the state last week marks the first time in 57 years that both Northern and Southern California have experienced extended heat waves simultaneously, California Undersecretary for Energy Affairs Joe Desmond said" (Foxnews.com, July 25).

IS GOD USING EVENTS TO TRY TO GET PEOPLE'S ATTENTION?

Of course, the Middle East war is the most dramatic event of all. For over 12 years, the Philadelphia Church of God has pointed to Iran as fulfilling the prophesied end-time role of "the king of the south." NOW IRAN HAS STARTED A WAR! And even more remarkable: *Israel and the U.S. are doing nothing to stop it.* The survival of our nations is at stake! Our will has been broken! It is almost shocking how quickly these events are moving and how rapidly we are entering "the times of the Gentiles"—a period the Bible also calls the Great Tribulation.

This world is rapidly becoming HOPELESS. Many commentators see that we have entered very dangerous times. Newt Gingrich and others have called it World War III. A July 19 article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, titled "Blogosphere abuzz with tales of Rapture, end of the world," talked about several sources that are speaking openly about signs of this being the end of civilization as we know it. One paragraph read, "Gerald Flurry, editor of the Trumpet.com, an online publication of the Philadelphia Church of God, seems to believe the world is stumbling unwittingly toward the fulfillment of the prophecies of Zechariah. He points out that the United Nations, many individual nations, and even many Israeli Jews are saying that Israel must give up East Jerusalem if Israel is to live peacefully with its Palestinian neighbors. This means, he writes, that 'the prophecy in Zechariah is now in the early stages of being fulfilled, even though the world doesn't know it!'"

In one way, the *Ottawa Citizen* got it wrong. We don't "SEEM TO BELIEVE" the world is stumbling toward the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecies. WE KNOW IT IS!

Do you remember the prophecy in Zechariah that article referred to? At the beginning of this year, I wrote to you, "YOU NEED TO WATCH JERUSALEM AS NEVER BEFORE. WE ARE GOING TO SEE ONE HALF OF THAT CITY FALL VERY SOON. IT COULD HAPPEN THIS YEAR—2006!" I based that statement on the prophecy in Zechariah 14, which says that half of Jerusalem falling begins a chain of events that leads to Jesus Christ's return.

EVENTS WE SEE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW COULD LEAD DIRECTLY TO HALF OF JERUSALEM FALLING THIS YEAR!

CLEARLY THESE EVENTS SHOW THAT IRAN IS PUSHING ITS GOAL TO DESTROY ISRAEL TO A NEW AND MORE DANGEROUS LEVEL. Iran wants to lead the whole world of radical Islam, and it is using this war between Hezbollah and Israel to accomplish that goal. Emotion and rage are exploding among Muslims around the world. A great percentage of them are dangerously sympathetic to what Iran is doing.

People will not be able to remain complacent for very much longer. What is happening in Lebanon right now is a type of what will shake the U.S. and Britain very soon! "FOR THE VIOLENCE OF LEBANON SHALL COVER THEE, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein" (Habakkuk 2:17). This is a prophecy that Lebanon would be in disastrous ruins in the latter days! Look at Lebanon today. But not only that: This is also a prophecy that the *same violence* would overtake ALL the end-time nations of Israel—only much worse, SINCE IT WILL INVOLVE NUCLEAR WARFARE!

Full-scale war is raging in the Middle East already! We don't have much time before it spreads. Habakkuk's prophecy tells us that this world is about to explode! The nations of Israel urgently need to be warned where this war is leading. God has warned US about these events—and He has also given us the solutions. Now you and I have the towering responsibility to warn the rest of the world what is about to happen.

In Isaiah 40, we are given this inspiring commission: "O [you], that bringest good tidings [to Zion], get thee up into the high mountain; O [you], that bringest good tidings [to Jerusalem], lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (verse 9). This is a prophecy of a message going out to the cities of Judah *just before the return of Jesus Christ*. THIS WORK, which YOU SUPPORT, has the UNPARALLELED HONOR TO INTRODUCE JESUS CHRIST TO THIS WORLD! It is going to happen so very soon!

WE ARE THE VOICE CRYING OUT TO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, JUST BEFORE CHRIST RETURNS, "BEHOLD YOUR GOD!"

We must tell the cities of Judah, YOU'RE GOING DOWN QUICKLY—BUT CHRIST IS COMING! They are about to be plunged into the Great Tribulation, and we need to warn them—and give them hope.

We are already going around to the cities of the United States in person, saying this very thing: BEHOLD YOUR GOD! CHRIST IS ABOUT TO RETURN! That's what these personal appearance campaigns are about. We are urgently trying to get out and help God convert more laborers to get this job done.

Our campaign in Philadelphia, Pa., was somewhat rushed. We did not have much time to advertise or prepare for it, and we definitely learned lessons that will help future campaigns run more smoothly. Still, in addition to the PCG members who attended, I spoke to 78 new people the first night and 45 the second night. Thirty of these want to attend follow-up Bible studies, which will be conducted by one of our full-time ministers in the area. In Chicago, where we were better prepared, of 350 in attendance the first night, 187 were new people. The second night there were 122 new people; 52 of these people have asked to attend follow-up Bible studies.

Every one of these individuals is important to God! Pray, if you will, that God would bless them. Without a doubt, the campaigns are stirring new interest in the PCG, while at the same time providing a very personal and powerful warning to the cities of Israel. These campaigns are well worth the effort.

I learned an important lesson a few years ago I'd like to share with you. Numbers do give us indications about certain trends in God's Work, but God sees far more than just numbers. Some time ago I did a campaign in Pasco, Wa. We had no television coverage in that area, so we tried to stir some interest with a personal campaign. On the first night, very few people attended. There was a family with a couple of teenagers, and we knew that for the second night, this family would be the only people to come. I was quite disappointed with the low turnout, so I decided to cancel the second night. Not

long after, the head of that family called me. He was bitterly upset that I had advertised the second night and not followed through on delivering it.

I am convinced that GOD CORRECTED ME THROUGH THAT MAN. I had focused too much on numbers. But in God's Work, *every individual* makes a huge difference. *One strong family* can transform a congregation and have a tremendous impact on God's Church. And that is only viewing it on the physical level. When that individual, or that family, qualifies for God's Kingdom, the positive effect they can have on God's eternal Family will be multiplied many times over! So we can't look for numbers with these campaigns. We are a small Church, and God will always only use a small group—a "little flock"—to do His Work.

HOW RARE AND PRECIOUS YOU MEMBERS AND CO-WORKERS ARE TO GOD! This is the Work of the living God! We must always remind ourselves of that, and realize how privileged we are to support it.

At our Philadelphia campaign, one person remarked that she was struck with how SAD the people looked when they came in to the hall—and at how HAPPY they looked at the end of the night! This is a depressing world. Those people were probably sad because of their personal problems or troubles in the world around them—they may have been unsure of what to expect from that campaign. BUT GOD'S MESSAGE ALWAYS LEAVES US HAPPY AND SMILING, if we're getting what God wants us to get! It is a message FILLED WITH HOPE. You and I are part of a WORK OF HOPE AND MIRACLES. It is a beautiful Work, and that truth was reflected even in the countenance of the people who came in contact with it at our campaigns.

One husband and wife who attended spoke to me afterward. It was clear the message hadn't made much of an impact on the husband. But the woman was full of enthusiasm. "I'm so happy and thrilled to be here!" she told me. You could tell God's message had reached her that night very effectively. It is my prayer that God would be able to continue to work with her and bring her along. There is no telling what He can do if she continues to respond so positively to Him.

What a contrast between the hope of God and the hopelessness of the world. Bill O'Reilly and other commentators say they don't see a way out of the problem in the Middle East. That is real HOPLESSNESS. More and more people are realizing that if this world keeps going the direction it is going, THERE IS NO HOPE! If mankind can't find a way out of this nuclear impasse, it means ALL FLESH IS GOING TO BE DESTROYED!

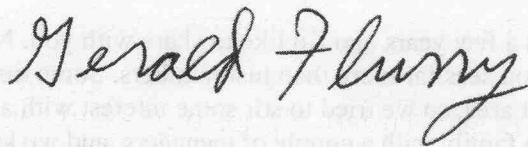
But in a way, that hopelessness is GOOD. God is going to allow circumstances to keep getting worse until mankind realizes that THERE IS NO HOPE IN MAN. Things will have to devolve to a horrific state before people begin to realize that THE ONLY TRUE HOPE LIES IN GOD! That is why our message is becoming more important all the time.

DO YOU SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE WAR IN ISRAEL AND OUR PERSONAL APPEARANCE CAMPAIGNS? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK THAT YOU, BELOVED PEOPLE OF GOD, SUPPORT? GOD IS RUSHING US TO UNDERTAKE THESE CAMPAIGNS BECAUSE WE NEED LABORERS TO GET THIS MESSAGE OUT!

Right now, Hezbollah is shelling the cities of Israel with rockets. But very soon, probably less than a decade, Christ is going to return to that land, put a stop to the war forever, and bring an exciting and exhilarating peace! And God's people will be right there with Him, ruling the world from Jerusalem with Him, teaching this world how to have peace and happiness and joy! What a magnificent hope there is in that message!

What a wonderful Work you and I are part of, precious brethren and co-workers, that we can share this message with a world that so desperately needs it. Let's do all we can to amplify the sound of that voice, going out to the cities of Judah, saying "BEHOLD YOUR GOD!"

With love, in Jesus's name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Flurry". The ink is dark and the writing is fluid, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Gerald Flurry