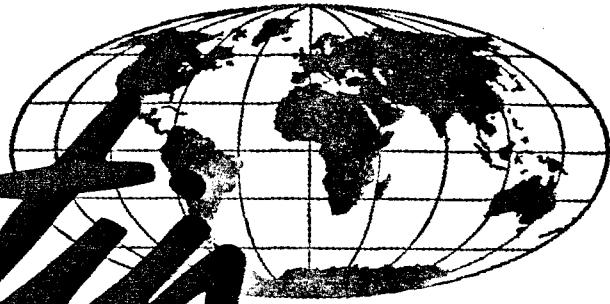


The **Bulletin**



of the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College

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APRIL 8, 1975

Church Administration

Greetings again fellows:

We have just completed a fine Festival of Unleavened Bread. Reports we are hearing from across the country are that this Passover season has been uplifting, meaningful, and encouraging — perhaps a little more than usual. I had the privilege of being in Pasadena for the Passover and the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Would you believe the last time my wife Doris and I observed the Passover in Pasadena was 1953? I have heard many, many comments of how uplifting this Holy Day season has been to the members here at Headquarters.

By the time you receive this *Bulletin* we will have conducted another conference — this time in Nashville, Tenn. This will be the 6th such conference. We are looking forward to seeing all of you in the remaining areas as soon as possible. Hopefully, we will have concluded this present series of conferences by the first of June. This will mean a *very* busy May.

One of the tremendous benefits of these conferences has been the building of further unity in the ministry and the Church. We are building better bridges of understanding between you and those of us at Headquarters. I feel we are building a deeper awareness and appreciation for each other's service, responsibilities, problems, and needs.

In the conferences I have said quite a bit about supporting each other, backing each other up, about being loyal to each other as fellow ministers and not trying to make ourselves look good by tearing down what a fellow minister has done before us or perhaps what a member has done.

Everywhere I go I hear ministers tell me there has been too much of that kind of thing. Frankly, I feel this attitude will ultimately reflect *only* on the one who does the negative talking.

Let us always remember that *love* covers for others even if they may have done some things differently than you would have — or perhaps been quite wrong in some areas.

By the way, Mr. Herbert Armstrong drummed this principle of loyalty to each other into our heads in conference after conference back in the mid to late 50s. Also, it is so very obvious to any who have had any close contact with him that he has always been very loyal to us younger ministers and very defensive of us in the proper way — not believing the fake report without proper justification. Many a time Mr. Armstrong has "heaped coals of fire on my head" by his holding my hands up, his support, and encouraging comments to me.

Please don't take this as heavy correction but rather as instruction. Hopefully you can glean a few good principles from it. Where the shoe fits, please wear it. Fellows, we need to be a dedicated, close-knit team. We should be not only loyal to each other in the ministry, but we as ministers should be "jealous" of the flocks in our charge. Let us always be careful to *not* listen to false accusations of brother against brother — not be hasty to believe bad reports and evil tidings. Where indeed there is need to handle a problem and the "report" has been established "in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses," then, of course, we must deal with the problem.

NOTICE

The date for the second Passover is Thursday evening, April 24, after sunset.

We might compare this to a family situation. None of us would want to believe an evil report from anyone against one of our children, or you would not want to believe a bad report from one child against another. Certainly where it appears serious enough to consider, we would want to go to the child and discuss the matter privately and directly to determine the substance of the matter. Even then where we determined there had been misconduct or wrong attitudes, we would settle the matter privately and try to keep gossip and destructive reports from spreading. In other words, our love would want to cover the "sin," the error, etc., and not spread it.

This is the respect we should show to those God has placed in our charge. This is the love we need to express toward our fellow workers and ministers. This is the attitude that is well pleasing to God.

Ministerial Conference

Thanks to all of you who have responded to my *Bulletin* column concerning the annual Ministerial Conference. By the way, many have not replied with any thoughts one way or the other, so I can only assume you have no strong opinions about the matter.

The overwhelming majority of comments received indicated a basic agreement with the statements we made. Everyone expressed appreciation for the previous conferences in Pasadena — especially the May conference last year — but also felt it inadvisable to attempt to justify and organize such conferences annually.

Some expressed valid reasons for coming to Headquarters once a year — reasons which I basically agree with and to some degree expressed in my previous article. I know there are benefits and worthwhile reasons for a major ministerial conference in Pasadena and this is why we will continue to have them on an every-other-year basis for the present, at least. Needs and circumstances may vary this of course.

An official decision has now been made concerning a Conference this mid-year. There will be no major ministerial conference in Pasadena until at least next January. Most of you have expressed a preference for January over May/June. If any still wish to comment about this please do so.

Trainees

We are now in the process of finalizing our manpower assignments and transfers for this summer. In order to do this most effectively we need certain information from you as soon as possible.



of the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College

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Many of you who have a trainee working with you have now had him for approaching one year. In some cases trainees have been out for 2 or more years. What we need now is for you to update us with your current evaluation of his development, abilities and his potential.

Please take the time to carefully think through your evaluations. Remember, you are largely bearing the responsibility of a man's future involvement in the Work. Hopefully, even those who do not go on into the ministry will continue to be involved in the Church as good stable, strong, service-oriented members. In making our evaluations we need God's spirit, His mind and spiritual discernment, so please pray seriously about this.

It has been reported that in industry back 40-50 years ago, most supervisors took the matter of determining employee potential intuitively. Employees were given day-to-day work assignments but no larger, far-reaching objectives. Then when evaluation time came the supervisors would hand out off-the-cuff opinions of a subordinate's worth. "Yes, he was doing a job," or "no, his performance didn't merit a raise, or promotion or

(Continued on page 182)

TITHING

PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

Preliminary Report to Ministry
March 31, 1975

Since this is a preliminary paper, no announcements or comments about any administrative aspect should be made. This paper is for your private use and should not be distributed to any others in your area.

Introduction

As requested by Messrs. Herbert W. Armstrong and Garner Ted Armstrong, the Doctrinal Committee has conducted a series of meetings on the administration of tithing. This series followed publication of the "Study Paper on Tithing" (in October 1974), which reaffirmed the basic theology of tithing as a fundamental law of God and a binding doctrine and teaching of the Worldwide Church of God.

Input for the subsequent study was requested on all ramifications of present-day applications and administrations of the tithing law, especially in relationship to the manifold complexities of 20th-century economics. Major input was received — and utilized — from all areas of the world (e.g. Australia), in addition to the information gathered at the May 1974 Ministerial Conference.

Overall Financial Concept

Mr. Herbert Armstrong has long emphasized that one of the primary reasons why individuals are called today rather than in the future is to do the Work of God. Consequently, it is incumbent upon everyone in God's Church to do his or her utmost to support the Work in every way possible, including financially.

This has been, and is, well appreciated by God's people, who have continuously, faithfully, generously and cheerfully given of their resources so that the Work of God could be done.

As Mr. Ted Armstrong has said, "Giving is commanded" by God. It is essential that every person to whom God has given His Spirit do everything in his power to enable God's message to reach and help others, just as others have made it possible for God's message to reach and help him. God's Work is a giving Work — a Work of love — a work desperately needed to bring hope and salvation to a world devoid of the former and ignorant of the latter.

It must be in this context — of God's people

having been called to do the most important work on earth — that these guidelines regarding the administration of tithing are presented.

Background and Basic Situation

For years the Church has given the basic guidelines: tithe on the adjusted gross income (though sometimes the term "gross income" was mistakenly used). That is, the businessman would take off his legitimate business expenses first before determining the tithe — while the wage-earner who had no such expenses would tithe on the adjusted gross figure which did not deduct business expenses. In all areas of the world, all would always tithe on their incomes *before* taxes, and anything else, in any situation, was judged errant.

Since this basic guideline was given back in the late 1930s, tremendous changes have occurred throughout the world, especially in the area of governmental tax structures. As a result, we have faced the immediate (and understandable) tendency to have the Church issue new guidelines taking into consideration the many varied national tax structures. However, we soon came to recognize that this approach is subject to pitfalls, not the least of which is hopelessly embroiling ourselves even further in the myriad complexities of man's tortuous tax systems.

There is also the need to clarify the principles on which expenditures may be legitimately deducted by the wage-earner and businessman alike, such as costs of uniforms, tools, union dues, etc., required for the job; depreciation, capital gains, interest on business loans, etc. for the businessman; as well as income taxes, whether collected on the national or local level, for both the wage-earner and the businessman.

Should the Church involve itself in answering the multitudinous specific questions which must inevitably come up?

Decision on Tithing Administration

The Church policy on tithing administration is that the individual must make his own decisions in all these matters, before his God, on the basis of general principles set forth by the Bible and administered by the Church, rather than have the Church detail specifics.

The Worldwide Church of God reconfirms and re-emphasizes its adherence to the basic principle of tithing as established and exemplified in God's Word. And in this context, each individual, as led by God's Spirit and as motivated by a deep desire to serve God and support His Work, must conscientiously determine in his own personal situ-

ation his true "increase" upon which to calculate his tithe.

Should a carpenter deduct his tools? A factory worker his uniform? A commuter his travel expenses? Should an Australian businessman or office employee deduct his taxes? What about their American counterparts?

The Church's policy puts the full weight of responsibility in answering such questions where it rightfully belongs — on the individual — and at the same time achieves worldwide consistency in approach for the Church, and maintains God's law as it relates to tithing.

It is the duty of each begotten Son of God to find biblical examples and determine more precise guidelines which, with prayer and deep personal reflection, reveal God's mind in the matter of their own personal incomes. In practical fact, our brethren should be giving offerings sufficiently above and beyond so that the strict differentiation of where the tithe ends and the offering begins becomes virtually meaningless.

Actually, it has always been the practice of those who wished to *insure* they were giving generously to God to give sufficiently beyond the 10 percent figure so as to automatically avoid any possible error through honest misunderstandings which may have caused them to give less than an actual tithe.

Before or After Taxes? — The General Principle

It is not the tithe that has become a burden, but skyrocketing tax rates. The "tithe" is always a tenth, and never a burden. But taxation rates vary widely and are subjected to constant adjustments. Here are some background facts that will enable the ministry to clarify the general principle of relating one's increase to the many divergent tax structures extant.

A fundamental fact generally overlooked is that in ancient Israel each individual head of household was responsible for making his own decisions, before his God, as to what constituted "increase." *Nowhere in all the Bible are specific details or regulations given.* God's law provided for each head of household an area of land on which he did not have to pay property tax — much less rent or purchase price (Numbers 32:1-5, 33:42; 27:11; Joshua 13:19, especially 13:14). This was the acme of financial security.

Furthermore, when God gave instructions about tithing cattle, He did not require the first animal that came down the chute — even though He could have. He asked for the tenth. If no tenth

animal came through, or passed under the rod, God didn't take anything. He simply did not claim the first tenth, only *a* tenth (Leviticus 27:32-33). The conclusion is that the Israelites did tithe on the bulk of their income, but they did not tithe on a strict absolute gross income. God allowed offerings to take care of that. We would be best advised to follow the same practices today, and *not* generate a whole legal code governing the interpretation of "increase."

Two examples from the Bible will help us understand our individual relationship to man's tax structures. Ten percent was set aside in Egypt by Joseph for human secular government and another ten percent for the religious function of the nation (Genesis 47:23-26 and Josephus' *Antiquities*). In Israel, under Saul, ten percent was exacted of the people for human government in addition to the tithing system God had instituted when He set up the nation as His own. Many other burdens were imposed by Saul besides the ten percent tax (I Samuel 8:10-18). In neither of these instances do we have any biblical judgment indicating the tithe that belongs to God should be figured in any new or different manner.

The imposition of taxes in Saul's reign has an important bearing on the question of tithing before or after taxes today. Did Samuel make a ruling that Saul's tax was now deductible from one's increase prior to determining God's tithe? No such ruling is anywhere recorded in Scripture. The Church today has no precedent for deciding that all taxes withheld from salaries are deductible prior to figuring the tithe. On the other hand, the governments of this world are not limiting themselves to a ten-percent tax structure. Many are collecting 25 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent, or more in income taxes — and that without any consideration, in most cases, of donations to charitable organizations.

Most nations do not recognize as tax deductible tithes and offerings to religious institutions or donations to any nonprofit institution. In effect, this suggests that governments exercise the right to a prior claim — even before that of God's — to one's earned income.

Let us look for a moment at the great changes that have taken place in the last 40 years in the tax structure. In 1934 when this Work began, the per capita income in the U.S. averaged \$424.00. The per capita federal tax was \$21.13 — only 4.98 percent of income. But by 1971 (the latest available data) per capita income was \$4,156 — the per capita federal tax was \$927.02, or 22.3 percent. Today, *direct* U.S. federal tax is estimated over 25

percent. State and local income taxes would increase the portion to a direct total tax of approximately one third of the average U.S. citizen's income.

In Britain, Scandinavia, Australia, and other countries, the tax load is even greater. In fact, years ago the Church found that in Britain and Scandinavia a special tithe ruling had to be made in particular instances because certain individuals were paying 80 percent to 90 percent of their income in taxes. For individuals in this category to pay tithes requires over 100 percent of income, a logical absurdity that demanded a Church ruling. The Church does have the power to bind and loose and has exercised that authority in individual cases where the present tax rate has become prohibitive.

A precedent that has also been weighed in the present decision involves splitting titheable income to preserve a marriage with an unconverted mate. In a situation where a converted husband has an adamantly antagonistic mate opposed to tithing, the Church has allowed the man to consider his wife entitled to half the income. This means that the man pays tithes and offerings only on one half of his actual income ("Tithes and Offerings," March 14, 1973, p. 6). In such cases the decision is that, in a sense, God holds the unconverted mate responsible for tithing on 50 percent of the income. Further, the Church has judged that a wife whose antagonistic mate prevents her tithing is free of the obligation and he is held responsible by God for her entire income.

The implication of these judgments has been carefully weighed. And it is proper for the individual whose tax burdens are significant to seek relief from that tax burden by modifying his increase or titheable base. But the individual, not the Church, must make the decision. Whether in a general situation or on any specific question, the individual himself is responsible before his God. This is crucial.

It is the Church's and the ministry's responsibility to teach the general principle and to provide biblical examples as guidelines. With every nation having its own tax laws, and constantly changing its laws at that, there is no possible way for the Church to make a definitive and equitable decision applicable to everyone in the matter of tithing before or after taxes. The same principle holds true for any other potential deduction used to determine one's real increase. It should be a very personal, private matter between the individual and his God. As private a matter as prayer or fasting. Any private and individual questions of

conscience should be more than resolved through giving generous offerings. God is calling us to be co-workers in His Work today and preparing us to be His Sons in His Family tomorrow. Our financial responsibilities to Him are a significant aspect of our stewardship.

Third Tithe/Emergency Fund

How are we to apply Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12-15 — now that state, federal and provincial governments have, through taxation, assumed much of the responsibility for the care of the poor and destitute?

A basic judgment pertaining to the third or poor tithe was rendered by Garner Ted Armstrong in the May 1974 Conference. Christians, of necessity, must care for those in need. This clarification of responsibility recognized the poor tithe is *for the poor* and destitute, *not from them*. This was, in fact, a restatement of the original Church policy which had basically left up to the individual person to implement the poor tithe or to make his personal needs known.

A new factor has entered the picture because of the rapid increase in welfare programs. Each year, depending on the country one lives in, as high as 25 percent of income is taken by the government to support welfare programs. This sum is far above what would have been expected if social welfare were left to the individual to administer.

As Christians, we have an obligation to care for those in need among us who cannot receive government welfare — or who cannot subsist on welfare alone. We must all, as much as possible, go above and beyond in taking care of the needy and handicapped. In fact, the law teaches we must do more than just pay the poor tithe (Deuteronomy 15:7-11). I Timothy 5:16 conveys the intent of the law even further by placing responsibility on family members to care for needy widows so the Church won't be burdened with this duty any more than necessary.

God's Church today has an ongoing need to provide for the widow, the fatherless, and all those unable to support themselves. As ministers we owe it to the brethren, for their spiritual good, to encourage them to continue providing for the welfare of the needy among us. We should avoid stating that a full ten percent every third year is a complete fulfillment of the law, but rather stress that the need is ever-present and involves a true Christian's effort and concern, as well as financial sacrifice.

Certainly the Bible does state the basic principle of a ten percent poor tithe every third year.

(Whether it should be the third and sixth year in every seven-year cycle today as opposed to just every third year is a moot point.) However, the strict payment of ten percent every third year did not relieve the Old Testament Israelites — and certainly does not relieve Christians — of their continuing responsibility to be concerned for the poor. Ten percent every third year is definitely a God-given guideline. But it is certainly within the spirit of the law for any individual, should he choose and as he is able, to allocate a smaller percentage of his income for the poor *every year*. Being deeply concerned about, and directly helping, the poor is commanded. Exactly how the Christian should go about it today is left to his discretion. People who can should be encouraged to vigorously give of their time, energy and goods if their monetary resources are limited. And those who can should be further encouraged to take up the financial gap.

The manner of saving or setting aside money for the indigent, widows, etc. should now be considered. We already have one example of the administration of aid for the poor: the Church expects family members to care of their own needy flesh and blood. Such individuals would not be saving only in the third year, but continually as the need exists. Therefore, it would be equally acceptable for Church members in general to budget sums for the poor annually (month by month) rather than one year in three. (The reason for the tenth in the third year is, after all, that a tenth was the easiest method by which to reckon, and once in three years would have reduced the welfare burden in ancient Israel enough over the years to make it just and yet adequate.)

A clarification of this matter would be administrative, and not represent doctrinal change. Giving a smaller percentage for the poor each year is a viable alternative but would not preclude the saving of a tenth the third year for those who wish and can so budget their income. Nor would it preclude generosity beyond the tenth, such as Zacheus who gave half his goods to the poor (Luke 19:8).

It is evident that in the Old Testament any deserving indigent person could receive the poor tithe. He did not have to fall into the specific categories of widow, orphan, or newcomer. Men as well as women were eligible. Thus any distinction between third tithe and emergency fund appear an artificial one. Members should be admonished to give to the one fund — and to give generously, as is their duty.

Further Clarification of Feast Tithe

The second or festival tithe is not a tithe independent of the festivals. It is, in fact, a part of the law of the feast rather than some adjunct of the tithe that is God's. The festival tithe law presumes that there would be those unable to save an adequate festival tithe. Their needs were to be met by those with larger than average incomes (Deuteronomy 16:11-12, 14). That is, those who could were expected to save the festival tithe even though it be more than they needed in order to take care of those without adequate funding.

The basis for calculating the festival tithe in the Old Testament was not a blanket ten percent of income as in the first tithe. Indeed a tithe was saved from year to year "on all the increase of thy seed," which included the tithe of grain, wine and oil (Deut. 14:22-23). But uniquely it did not include a tithe of cattle or flocks, but firstlings instead (v. 23). This is not to teach us that grain farmers must pay a strict tenth while others have more flexibility. Rather the lesson is that the percentage of one's income for the festivals is at least somewhat variable and *should* approach the full tenth for as many as God has indeed blessed.

Once again it is the principle of each individual Christian, in personal relationship to his God, who must fulfill the dual responsibilities of observing God's festivals fully as God requires and generously helping those who are unable to do likewise.

Summary and Overview

This work is God's Work. It has always been, and always will be, *a work of faith* — a work totally relying on God for support and sustenance as well as for guidance and leadership. We, collectively, have all been given an enormous responsibility — to preach God's witness and warning message to all nations and to baptize into His Church those whom God calls. Indeed it is a "Great Commission" — and we are all part of it, responsible to finance it with our tithes and offerings to the limit of our abilities as God blesses us.

As we standardize and simplify our guidelines for the application and administration of tithing in today's society, we must always remain cognizant of the overall principle — that God is using us to finance His Work which is bringing His magnificent announcement to humanity, to save mankind from itself.

It is the responsibility of those who are able, more than ever before, to give as they have never given before, to accomplish God's Work on earth.

As God has designed His Work, approximately ¾ of our income is derived from the tithe-paying membership of the Church. While much of these funds are "offerings" of one type or another, tithes themselves constitute a significant proportion of the funds available to do God's Work.

We must encourage as many brethren as are able to maintain or even extend their financial commitments to God's Work in order to take up the slack which will be created by the few who may be forced to make reductions in their contributions.

In a very real sense, these guidelines for tithing put *more* — not less responsibility on the individual, and give everyone the added opportunity to privately express his own personal relationship with his Creator.

It is incumbent upon the ministry of Jesus Christ to encourage those who are able to go above and beyond in giving to God out of the abundance of the blessings He has bestowed upon them. Also to encourage those who are new to begin to tithe.

Tithing must be conveyed as a very personal matter between the individual and his God. It must never become a case of some being more "righteous" than others in determining their titheable base. The offerings of everyone should be sufficiently above and beyond that any doubts about having tithed fully and properly before God are obviated.

Each minister should be careful in giving individuals specific advice in matters of tithing. How you determine your increase is a personal matter between you and God.

The most important point to remember is simply that tithing, like prayer, is the very essence of one's own personal dedication to God, to His saviour, Jesus Christ, and the very Work of which He is living *Head*. We cannot enter into God's Kingdom by deception, either in our private prayer lives or in our private tithing lives. We must beware of the "leaven" of the doctrines of either extreme: of the Pharisees, who tithed with rigorous, minute, picayunish, painstaking ritualism — or the opposite extreme of being careless with one's income, thinking selfishly and not being in a true spirit of giving. Christ commands us to "GIVE, and it shall be given unto you...." Giving is COMMANDED. But God allows us to decide *whether* we shall obey.

NEVER should a minister attempt to "check up" on a member concerning faithfulness in tithing. We all should recognize that if a person is being unfaithful in tithing, he will also, of natural consequence, be slacking up in other equally personal

aspects of private Christian life. The *attitude* and the intent of the heart is the WHOLE thing. Logically, when you find a deteriorating spiritual *attitude*, you can almost always be assured there will be a problem with tithing too. It is not "Church policy" to disfellowship for not tithing. When obviously serious spiritual problems emerge and tithing is one of several other deeply personal matters which comes to the surface, disfellowship may have to occur. But neither the primary nor the covert reason for such disfellowship should be the amount of one's contributions.

Far more important, then, than an individual member's wisdom in HOW he determines his increase is his ATTITUDE. A truly converted Christian IS IN A SPIRIT OF GIVING — and is *not* filled with greed, covetousness, selfishness, or resentment at having to GIVE to God's Work! The HEART is where God looks, not the pocketbook. It is where Christ's true ministry must also look — on the heart!

That is what each minister must stress. The Pharisees tithed with great care — not to see how generous they could be; it took a widow with two mites to illustrate generosity of heart — she gave her all.

Financial admonition is replete throughout the Bible — e.g. Paul in II Cor. 9:5: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren...."

II Cor. 9:6-9 fully exemplifies God's attitude:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever [KJV].

But remember this — if you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. Every one must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to, for cheerful givers are the ones God prizes. God is able to make it up to you by giving you everything you need and more, so that there will not only be enough for your own needs, but plenty left over to give joyfully to others. It is as the Scriptures say: "The godly man gives generously to the poor. His good deeds will be an honor to him forever" (Living Bible).

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has

made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever" (RSV).

All I will say is that poor sowing means a poor harvest, and generous sowing means a generous harvest. Let everyone give as his heart tells him, neither grudgingly nor under compulsion, for God loves the man who gives cheerfully. God can give you more than you can ever need, so that you may always have sufficient for yourselves and enough left over to give to every good cause. As the scripture says: He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor; His righteousness abideth [sic] for ever" (Phillips Modern English).

Remember: sparse sowing, sparse reaping; sow bountifully, and you will reap bountifully. Each person should give as he has decided for himself; there should be no compulsion; God loves a cheerful giver. And it is in God's power to provide you richly with every good gift; thus you will have ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation, with enough and to spare for every good cause. Scripture says of such a man: 'He has lavished his gifts on the needy, his benevolence stands fast for ever' (New English Bible).

As man's time grows short, as his unbearable problems mount, we in God's Church must make every effort to get His Work accomplished. What a great privilege to be called by God to help get that job done!

NOTES

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

April 4, 1975

OFFICE OF
GARNER TED ARMSTRONG
Vice President

To all ministers and key supervisory personnel worldwide:

GREETINGS!

I have just returned from the final Holy Day in New Orleans where we had a very warm and enthusiastic crowd of some nine churches from as far away as Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Lake Charles, Louisiana. The final Holy Day offering was a substantial increase over the previous year's offering, and earlier reports indicate an approximate ten percent increase for the entire nation as a whole in the dollars-per-person over the previous year.

At long last the tithing paper you are receiving is for all practical purposes complete. Wayne's letter explains, however, we don't want to make this official without each one of you having a final opportunity for any suggestions or input of your own, and so we are still allowing sufficient time for any last-moment input so as to insure each individual who may be concerned has an opportunity to be heard.

As I said in my sermon on the "Spirit of Giving," God does COMMAND us to give! Jesus commanded it, and it is incumbent upon God's true Church today.

Looking at all the analogies in the Bible -- even that of abject slavery in the relationship of a Christian whose very being (pneuma soma psuche) is OWNED of God -- I cannot IMAGINE any person claiming to be "converted," his whole life completely given as a living sacrifice into the hands of God, claiming to be a "Christian," yet having an attitude of resentfulness and rebellion toward giving God His prior claim over our own incomes.

For one to give his very being to God, body, soul and spirit, desperately wanting God to change his entire character and personality, praying with his might to enter into God's Kingdom, seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness requires an attitude diametrically opposed to that of the self-seeking, selfish, introverted person, begrudgingly trying to hew as close as possible to the exact letter of the law regarding giving so as to avoid making the big "mistake" of giving God "too much"!

NEVER should the doctrine of tithing or the spirit of giving be used as a CLUB over people's heads, anymore than the doctrine of

baptism, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, or the laying on of hands is used as a club.

ALL obedience to God is VOLUNTARY.

God does not allow us to decide WHAT is His law -- only WHETHER we shall obey it!

It is up to us as shepherds, ministers, teachers, pastors of the flock to emphasize the fact that we are "helpers of their joy," patiently guiding, pointing the way, leading God's flock in the right directions, never being "policemen over their faith." Therefore, though tithing is definitely COMMANDED as a biblical doctrine and a New Testament example, it must not be used in the sense of an individual minister "enforcing" it in an individual case under the threat of disfellowship.

If someone is cheating on his tithes, then his spiritual development is going to be so impeded that other spiritual problems will obviously emerge. In the same fashion, if someone is careless with his Sabbath-keeping, lets down on his prayer life or personal Bible study, or in other ways is deficient in his spiritual growth and development, the minister will be made painfully aware of these spiritual problems by many outward manifestations in the individual's personality and character.

When such a one is so impeded spiritually, the minister appears, according to the Bible, in the light of a gentle shepherd, a concerned older brother, one who is deeply concerned out of an outgoing attitude of love and consideration and who wants to HELP the afflicted one overcome his difficulties. NEVER should he appear as a person who is outraged over the inferior brand of spirituality being displayed, and he should not be determined to exert every influence and every authority to FORCE this person to come to heel and knuckle under to that individual minister's authority!

In the past some have confused the few very sensational cases of God's direct intervention, even to the taking of human life in flagrant examples of disobedience, with a pattern which was intended to be set for Christ's ministry down through the ages.

As I have said recently, I should imagine there are literally hundreds of cases where people have lied to ministers down through the ages since the first century and "lived through it," in the sense that there was no immediate retribution along the lines of the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

It is not the policy, as is stated in the paper, to excommunicate or disfellowship because a minister may find (and there is no way by which he COULD really find information other than the divulging of it voluntarily by the individual member) that a member has been unfaithful in tithing. This should never be grounds for disfellowship. Some detractors are alleging that the ministry may have been told at some time in the past that not tithing was in fact grounds for dis-

fellowship, but the minister should not list that as his "main reason." While I would tend to discount it as a false charge, I would certainly hope that any who ever made such statements have repented of them and could never think of doing so again in the future.

So let's be completely unafraid to preach and teach tithing and giving of offerings over and above the first tithe, which the individual member must diligently, seriously, soberly, prayerfully and cheerfully determine -- let's be diligent in preaching that one MUST GIVE, even giving of himself, his time, concern, energy, and prayer life as well as his substance. Let's emphasize giving as a deeply personal exercise not unlike prayer -- and not be fearful or apologetic in teaching people even as Jesus did, "GIVE and it shall be given unto you...."

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Sh. Armstrong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the last name.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

(Continued from page 182)

continued employment." This kind of appraisal technique was undependable, inconsistent and untrustworthy when it came to men's careers and the company's success.

Fellows, let's do better than that. You will receive very soon a separate memo and a trainee evaluation form. After you have received it, please complete and return it as soon as possible.

Now for one final thing.

Tithing Administration Paper

Inserted in this *Bulletin* for the *ministry only* is a preliminary paper on the administration of tithing. A great deal of time, prayer, and concern has gone into the preparation of this paper. It has been edited several times. Finally, just a few days ago, Mr. Ted Armstrong, assisted by a few of us on the Doctrinal Team, edited it as it now appears for you.

Will you take the time to carefully, prayerfully read and study this paper, make any notations, suggestions, edits, etc. on it (there are even several blank pages for notes) or in a separate memo and send them to us as soon as you can — hopefully within a week to ten days after you receive this *Bulletin*? If you feel this paper misses the mark, then please write one that is fairer, taking into consideration the many worldwide facets of the problem. If we don't hear anything from you I think all of you will agree that it would then be unfair for you to criticize the final paper. Fellows, I'm not being facetious in saying these things. Too often it seems so many of us have not wanted to contribute at the time we had opportunity and then carp at what was done.

After we have received your constructive critique, then we will produce an official ministerial paper followed by an article or two for the membership explaining the substance of this paper. Also based on the paper, material will be prepared for the *Good News* which goes to our Co-Workers and Donors as well as the membership.

You should bear in mind as you study this tithing paper that it is *not a doctrinal* treatise of the entire subject of tithing. This paper is presented from the premise that the Worldwide Church of God has made a binding decision that "tithing" is one of its fundamental tenets of belief. Based on that foundation the paper you are now receiving deals with the administrative aspects of the sub-

ject. We have considered the many and sundry conditions in the world that impact on any reasonably consistent administrative procedure for this important personal matter.

Frankly, we feel this paper comes as close as possible in light of the current maze of economic standards, tax structures, etc., in the world to outline a policy consistent in application throughout the world.

But now we want to hear from *you*. Please send your replies to me and I'll see that they get to the doctrinal team and, of course, to Mr. Ted Armstrong.

Since this is a preliminary paper, *do not* preach material from it or make any announcements or comments about any administrative aspect of the paper. Also, fellows, this paper is for your *private* use and should not be distributed to any others in your area.

That about does it for another *Bulletin*. I was going to comment on the fine National Teen's Basketball Tournament just completed here in Pasadena. I'll reserve that until next time and will then also outline plans we have for National Youth Activity coordination and possible future activities. Be sure to read Chris French's excellent contribution to the MET section of the *Bulletin*. And please, fellows, let's all accept the challenge.

"Let's keep on keeping on" and let us hear from you soon.

— C. Wayne Cole

Mail Processing

Mail for March ended with a strong 44.8% increase over February, giving us 203,522 letters received. This brings our total for the year to 629,268 letters. 1975 mail for the first quarter has declined slightly when compared to last year, but we are still receiving a *lot of mail* when viewed from the aspect of workload, processing time, and having publications available to fill requests.

WATS Breaks Record

This month (March) was an all-time record for the WATS area — greater than even last spring — and it might be well to note that WATS is taking many requests which could otherwise come by letter. During March 35,000 live calls were received and 56,000 busy-outs. Because of this tremendous load, four new lines were added this month. We have really needed this extra capacity and could actually use more. The telephone has

proved to be a very effective tool in getting God's message to multiple thousands.

Mr. Ted Armstrong's half-hour "Famine" telecast has pulled a very good response, as did the program on "How To Survive In '75." As a result our booklets *Famine — Can We Survive?* and *Managing Your Personal Finances* have been our leading booklets this month.

This about wraps it up for this issue. Processing the Holyday offering is keeping us busy, along with the above activities. Financial Affairs will probably report the details of the offering in their section when all the totals are in.

— Richard Rice

LETTER COMMENTS

AMBASSADOR FOR WORLD PEACE SLIDE PRESENTATION

The film presentations of Mr. Herbert Armstrong's activities abroad have been very much appreciated by the membership. The following letters are typical of many comments received about the film:

We saw the film on HWA — Ambassador For World Peace — at Church last Sabbath. It is truly great! We wish to express our heart-felt prayers and what we can send to headquarters in way of money for the Work at this time. We just want you to know all our prayers are with Mr. Armstrong and we hope you can feel our prayers back of you as we try to hold your hands high.

— Mr. & Mrs. Drake B. Young
Plant City, FL

It was truly thrilling to see your film of the Manila campaign. It was absolutely fantastic the way it was put together. I was awed with tears of joy and my wife also.

— Mr. Kenneth Head
Whitesburg, GA

We were blessed last Sabbath to see the film that was made of your activities in other parts of the world. It made me more aware of the power God is giving you to carry out this phase of His Work.

It would be humanly impossible for any human being to accomplish such things with his own strength. We all hope and pray that you will continue to allow the Great God to use you until this Work is finished.

— Mr. James F. Jackson
Big Sandy, TX

This past sabbath, February 15, we observed you as you traveled and talked to foreign dignitaries throughout the world. It was very, very inspiring to see how well received you are in countries when you were unable to enter years ago. May God bless you and grant you strength. My prayers are with you.

— Miss Vivian A. Fleming
Cleveland, OH

Just a note to say I really enjoyed the film on the Manila Campaign. It was very inspiring to know the big responsibility God has given you and Garner Ted and all the rest who have a part in God's Work. Keep up the good work and keep us all on our toes! We need it. Especially me.

— Mrs. Frank R. Dukes
Timberlake, NC

Thank you for coming to the Indianapolis Church today (via movies) for Sabbath service. And to see the House for God being built before our eyes! How wonderful! It is breathtaking!

— Mrs. John Schaeffer
Lebanon, IN

Saw the film here in Ft. Worth this Sabbath where you were in India and the Philippines. They were wonderful and exciting. You looked in good health and the spring of youth in your feet and face. We love you. Take care.

— Mrs. Laverne Goodwin
Ft. Worth, TX

TAPED PASSOVER SERMON

Response to Mr. Ted Armstrong's taped Passover sermon sent to the churches seems to have had a very encouraging effect on the brethren. The comments show a genuine appreciation for the timely message and a desire to continue receiving these taped sermons.

Words Aren't Adequate

I just have to write and thank you for the taped sermons that come to us from Headquarters. Words are not adequate to express how much they mean. We, here in Spokane, sometimes feel isolated, being off the beaten track of visiting ministers, so hearing your voice speaking to us in assembly is next best to having you in person — which we hope for all the time.

I speak for myself and for many, I'm sure, in the Church here, when I say we pray without ceasing for your health and safety, for your voice, and for

the back-breaking responsibility you shoulder; this is also true for your father, for the other loyal, hard-working men of the ministry, and for all the faithful ones behind the scenes. We really talk to God about everything we can think of that goes to make a success of so great a commission.

How fine your sermon was — preparing us for Passover, which means so much, it breaks me up, not only at the date of its keeping, but all year long when it comes in meditation.

— Margaret Lay
Spokane, WA

"Really Needed That"

Glad to hear your tape on the Sabbath, March 8. You really explained what kind of an attitude we should be in at this time of year, not only now but all through the year. I really needed that and I think the whole Church did. Thank you.

One thing you said that stuck in my mind. "Gossip is a lack of forgiveness." I'd never thought of it like that before. And we must even be willing to forgive the enemies of the Work, and learn to love them, but still — all the while — hate their sins, as well as our own.

Also, thank you for all the time you spend writing those inspiring letters. Your love just shines through each letter you write. The last one I read was especially considerate, asking prayers for healing of different ones and even being sorry that you could start your garden early — while a lot of others couldn't. That's a heart much like Jesus has. And one that we should all strive to have. Your letters and tapes help the Church to grow, I think.

I will continue to pray for you, your father and the Work.

— Carolyn Comer
F'k City, OK

Tapes Really Great Idea

I think sending taped sermons to all the Churches is one of the greatest things that is being done in the Church today — especially during the time after the fall Holy Days and the spring Holy Days.

I know it gives me the spiritual lift I need. It helps me become more spiritually grounded for the things that must come to pass. Please keep it up and may God bless and continually inspire you in the Work you are doing.

— John Gretsky
Red Bank, NJ

Tapes Like Going to the Feast

I wanted you to know that we really appreciate your sermon tapes. It's like going to the Feast. The one we heard today on the Passover was inspired and very helpful. It's distressing to know the income is down and not be able to help. We've had all overtime cut off in our plant so things are somewhat tight. This being our third tithe year too. I have an income tax refund coming soon so I'll be able to send some for the property fund then.

Hope you'll be able to keep giving us sermons by tape. We all enjoy them very much.

— Gene Kurseth
Cedar Rapids, IA

Please Keep Them Coming!

As a member of the Worldwide Church of God for some years, I just wanted to thank you for the tapes that have been coming from Headquarters, especially yours on the last Sabbath about the Passover. I have an unconverted mate and although I can get several broadcasts in this area every evening, I am usually unable to listen to them; and hearing your voice occasionally is like a breath of fresh spring air. It seemed like a "miniature Feast" and I could close my eyes and picture the sea of people around me again. The special music was also very inspiring and added to this atmosphere. It taped well. If possible, please keep them coming. We need this personal contact now in these trying times when everything in this world around us tries to get our minds off the goal and our tremendous responsibility. It brings a feeling of closeness which we so desperately need. We truly appreciate your efforts in "feeding the flock." My prayers are with you all constantly. I wish I could do more. It is 20 degrees below, Thursday a.m. so don't talk gardens to us!! Ha.

— Mrs. George Eckman
Moose Lake, MN

Hope Others Were Moved As Much

This letter is in response to the taped sermon we received last Sabbath in Fresno.

I hope the other brethren were as moved as I was with the state the income is in. This money I'm sending isn't much, but please receive it with my prayers that the income will increase.

Thank you for that sermon. It was fantastic! I hope we can receive more sermons taped from you; they are very uplifting.

Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for the many, long, strenuous hours that you and Mr. Herbert strong put in each week. I personally want to let you know I'm behind you both 100%.

— Pat Hudson
Hanford, CA

First Passover Now Means More

Thank you so very much for going to the trouble of taping another very important sermon for us in your ever so hectic life cycle that you lead. You manage to move me so much and lift my spirit to more zealously put forth effort to become a better Christian. I want you to know that I am behind you and your father 100% and more if possible. I earnestly seek ways to help you in your effort in this end time when the world needs this message more than ever before. I want you to know that I surely will contribute to the building fund if I possibly can. I will earnestly pray that everyone will open their hearts up to this fund. This is my first time celebrating Passover and I am so very thankful for hearing you give a sermon on the Passover, for it has much more meaning to me now as I will, as God helps me, do everything in the right way.

— Jim Ervin
Springfield, OH

Felt They Should Send More

I had already sent in my building fund payment for March, but after hearing your report on the tape we heard last Sabbath, I felt I should send in a few more dollars. Perhaps if all who can will do the same, we can save the day and not have to pay it from the general fund.

I know that many can't afford to pay on the building fund, but I know a few in our congregation here, who are newer in the Church, and didn't realize the importance of it or just didn't know anything about the building fund.

We appreciated the taped sermon very much. I hope you are able to send them often.

— Mrs. Ruth Whitaker
Enid, OK

Most Timely and Encouraging

Thank you for a most timely and encouraging sermon that you sent us yesterday. The singing did not come out well on the tape, but the message certainly came through beautifully. I hope you can continue to send us taped sermons from time to time.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank whoever is responsible for the film "Herbert W. Armstrong, the Man and His Work," and for the one showing the building of the new Auditorium. I saw them both twice. They were deeply moving films to me. They greatly strengthened my faith in God and His Work and in the leadership Jesus Christ is inspiring. Thank you so very much.

The report on the building fund is not bright. I want to help.

— Bruce Lyon
Eugene, OR

Taped Sermons a Binding Force

Your tape today on the Passover and the importance of forgiveness sunk deep into my heart. I feel so rotten I just want to crawl around on my knees. I pray to God that I will continue to have this attitude and not ever forget this lesson. It's so important to keep the fire going, just burning and burning to continue the pursuit of perfection. I thank you beyond words for your dedication to God. Your sermons are a binding force for God's children, a burning fire to provoke action and a

(Continued on page 198)

Academic

In the last issue of the *Bulletin* I mentioned the College's interest in the Pasadena Federal Center. This facility is located about one block west of the campus along Grand Avenue. It was formerly the Vista del Arroyo Hotel. Pasadenaans simply refer to it as the Vista.

The Vista was built in the early 1930s. During the second world war the federal government acquired the facility and converted it to hospital use. Later it housed various federal departments including the military, F.B.I., and a local Congressman. It is vacant today.

The Vista is about to be reclassified as excess property by the federal government. It will most likely (but there are no guarantees) be declared surplus. In this event the property will be disposed of either through the donable real property program or simply sold to the highest bidder.

We are examining the possibility of using the Vista as a residence hall for men students. I am informed that it consists of 240,000 square feet. It would probably comfortably house 600 students and additionally provide room for recreation, laundry, and other support services.

It is possible for the federal government to donate the property to the college at a 50% to a 100% discount from the assessed value. Even if we were given 100% discount, the remodelling cost may be prohibitive.

We are presently conducting a detailed study to indicate the feasibility physically and economically of using the Vista.

There are several Pasadena area residents who would like to see us acquire the property. Since the building has become a landmark on the Pasadena skyline it has a special place in the minds of many who have grown up in its shadow.

While no decision has been reached concerning the Vista, I wanted to keep you informed of our thinking. If the property eventually comes our way it would nearly double the student capacity of the College and increase the size of the campus by nearly 30%.

Not bad if we can get it for free!

— Michael P. Germano

International Division

Update From Australia

Here is a brief review of the excellent growth experienced in the Australian Work in 1974 and on into 1975.

We ended the year 1974 with a 22.8% increase in income over 1973, the highest increase in eight years! Part of this was due to a 13% increase in co-workers in 1974 but the bulk of our income (about 70%) comes from tithe-paying members of God's Church. Income from members and co-workers in 1974 was approximately A\$1,500,000 (about U.S. \$2,000,000). This means the Work in Australia can continue to expand and reach many more people inspite of soaring inflation!

Plain Truth circulation increased by 40% to a record 107,000 in December 1974 as a result of our newsstand distribution programme. This new door opened "coincidentally" just as postal rates soared from 5¢ to 17¢ to mail one copy of the *Plain Truth*! Through newsagents, distribution costs have been reduced to about 3¢ per copy, saving the Work thousands of dollars per month.

Already, in the first three months of 1975, *Plain Truth* circulation has increased nearly 100% to over 200,000 copies monthly as a result of newsstand

distribution opening in major cities. By the end of this year we expect P.T. circulation to be at least 250,000 copies per month. This would be one *Plain Truth* for every 55 persons in Australia! Not bad when you consider our circulation was only about 50,000 six months ago.

More good news concerning the P.T. is that we were given approval by Headquarters to continue with a magazine format (rather than the tabloid newspaper) for our newsstand edition. This is very important for the Work here since we are just beginning our newsstand programme. The magazine is more acceptable at newsagents here and this door remaining open will mean a rapidly increasing readership.

Following on the heels of our rapidly increasing *Plain Truth* circulation, we will be increasing the number of campaigns (called *Plain Truth Lectures* here) and special Bible studies for our readers. All of our ministers will begin to be directly involved in this new programme this year. With the new thrust in God's Church for community involvement, we want people everywhere to become more and more aware of *who* we are, *where* we are and *what* we believe. Our ministers are going to become much more involved in making the Worldwide Church of God better known in each community.

So far in Australia we have reached nine cities with special *Plain Truth Lectures*. They are Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Wollongong and Newcastle. Approximately 3000 new people attended these lectures. About 200 attended follow-up Bible studies and Sabbath services. And about 50 of these new people have been baptized.

The real fruits of these special lectures and Bible studies cannot be measured by the number baptized. God is not calling everyone today and part of our job is to preach and teach the truth as a witness and warning before the end of this age comes (Matt. 24:14). Many new people who hear the truth of God preached will not really believe and repent until the time of the "great tribulation" (Revelation 7:9,14).

In 1974 our Mailing Department received nearly 130,000 letters or cards from Australians — an increase of 10% over the previous year. So many more new people are being reached by this Work!

Baptized members increased by nearly 7% to 2,600 by December, 1974. A weekly average of 3,600 men, women and children attended Sabbath services, a 14% increase, and 4,300 attended the Feast of Tabernacles for a 10% increase over the previous year.

In 1974 the number of churches in Australia increased from 19 to 27 (added Gold Coast, Bundaberg, South Sydney, Blackheath, Wollongong, Wodonga, Gippsland, Devonport) for a 42% growth and the number of ministers and assistants pastoring those churches grew from 25 to 33 (including local elders not in our employ) for a 31% increase.

Toward the end of this year, possibly by the Feast of Tabernacles, our new headquarters office building should be completed. Concrete foundations are about ready to be poured and if the good weather holds out we should be able to move into our own office-administrative complex before this year is over! When this is accomplished, the editors of the *Good News* magazine want to run a feature article with pictures on the Australian Work. By then we will have much more good news to give because God's Work in Australia is growing!

— Dennis Luker

Data Processing

I want to thank all of you who have sent in suggestions on how we can increase the circulation of the *Plain Truth* in the U.S. via newsstand distribution. We are now in the planning stages of just how much we can do along this line here in the U.S., and what procedures we need to establish to track the results properly.

Since we ask no subscription price for the PT, we must carefully control circulation so as not to exceed budget. Even when we do go on newsstands or into other types of distribution programs, each project will be carefully controlled and tested. I think you can see how circulation could get out of hand if too many programs were embarked on at once.

Growth of the PT is very dynamic with our radio and TV programs, plus the small efforts we are presently pursuing in other areas. WATS line responses to the back page ads in the recent PTs are adding many thousands of new subscribers. Worldwide circulation is nearly three million now — and growing!

Literature From Dissident Groups

Some few have written or called Richard Rice — Mail Processing Center — or me concerning the receipt of dissident literature at *new addresses*

sent into MPC. A few have expressed concern that there might be a "leak" in either (or both) MPC and DPC. Let me assure you that both Richard and I have been quite aware of the potential problems and possible breaches in our security and that we both have been analyzing the situation, instituting new procedures in some cases, studying alternate ways of processing certain data, and investigating the various ways that these other mailers can obtain new addresses and change-of-addresses. We hope to report on our study in one of the next few *Bulletins*. All I can say at this time is that we are doing all within our power to insure the security of our name/address file. Suffice it to say that there are several ways *outside the organization* — totally legitimate and legal — that mailers can use to obtain your *new* addresses. I hesitate even to mention these techniques lest dissidents who don't already know them somehow learn about them from this *Bulletin*!

Corporate Forms Design Committee

Our "PT" kits are at the printers now and will be inserted into a special three-ring binder, entitled "Corporate Stationery and Forms", along with the specs and policies on other types of stationery. Our work on the PT specs was interrupted slightly by emergency work we had to do on another brand new letterhead for the "Ambassador International Cultural Foundation." But we have made some progress on the "Garner Ted Armstrong" stationery too, and we are now in the process of establishing certain standards for "Ambassador College" and "Worldwide Church of God" stationery — specifically, standardizing on paper types and type fonts for these two corporations. Present plans call for the immediate cessation by Purchasing and Central Stores from purchasing any more 25% and 50% rag content bond papers and envelopes, and only to order the No. 4 sulphite for regular stationery and the No. 1 "Rippletone" sulphite for executive stationery — when the present supply has been exhausted by executive use. We have also selected from among the numerous A/C and WCG letterheads the one for each corporation that seems to be the most popular, to standardize on — at least temporarily until we have sufficient time to investigate thoroughly entirely new designs. As final specs become available, we'll send them to all holders of the "Corporate Stationery and Forms" manual for insertion.

That's it for this time. Hope you all had a profitable and enjoyable Unleavened Bread Feast!

— Benjamin R. Chapman

OPEN FORUM

OPEN FORUM was created to continue the same give-and-take discussions conducted during the workshops of the May, 1974 Ministerial Conference. OPEN FORUM affords you the opportunity to freely express your thoughts, ideas, opinions and suggestions regarding any area which you feel will contribute to the edification and stimulation of your fellow ministers and department managers. We want OPEN FORUM to be encouraging, thought-provoking — a vehicle through which constructive ideas can be born.

But please remember — and pardon our disclaimer — the views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official policies or procedures of the Worldwide Church of God or Ambassador College. Neither do they necessarily represent the views of the editorial staff of the Bulletin. Nor do they necessarily reflect any absolute conclusions or dogma on the part of the individual contributor — just food for thought and discussion. Send your OPEN FORUM contributions to the Bulletin, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, Calif. 91123. Be sure to double space your copy.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY — A HELP TO PROSPECTIVES

While we talk of change in God's Church — of maturing — we need to remember that a large percentage of our people are new. If we're not careful, we can easily forget that these people want basic, fundamental Christianity — just as we all did when we first came into God's Church. Somehow they believe God is calling them into His Church — and that is exciting as well as a little scary as they begin to swim against the tide of society. I think we need to remember that pristine awe and respect we had for the literature and even the ministers God had sent to teach us, when we first came into the Church. We can get so "mature" that we can forget what we needed when we first were being called.

One book I have found that prospectives really relish — and seems to energize them more than any other (outside the Bible) is Mr. Armstrong's Autobiography. Why? Because it is basic. It explains healing — it explains the Sabbath, faith, the Church — all by example. A new person relates very strongly to Mr. Armstrong's step by step growing into grace and knowledge. He understands the doubts, the mistakes — and the overall conviction that God is working a purpose in his life. He is inspired by the interventions and encouraged by the results of simple, child-like trusting in God.

The book captures the grass-roots Christianity we all experienced when we came into God's

Church. Most of those who read Volume I want Volume II — and do they want it! It is not uncommon to hear prospectives or new members saying, "I've read Volume I two or three times. When is Mr. Armstrong going to do Volume II?"

Another thing the Autobiography does is to make people familiar with Mr. Armstrong's loyalty and faith, and how God has used him. It captures the basic spirit that built this Work. I would like to see it made more available to prospectives, and I wish that Volume II somehow could be completed. What could be more encouraging and constructive to new people, who now have contact with ministers who haven't had contact with Mr. Armstrong and these foundational events, than to read of the struggles and battles in this little grain of mustard seed growing into a Worldwide Work.

When I first came into God's Church I relished hearing about how the colleges began and personal anecdotes about Mr. Armstrong. These things are becoming second, third, even fourth hand today. I think the Autobiography captures that pioneering first love that is not sophisticated, but child-like in its trust that God will provide. And we can't emphasize that enough, because that's what it is all about.

— Rod Dean
Newcastle, N.S.W., Australia

THE "ONE-ON-ONE" SYNDROME

The Bible certainly teaches that we should have a "one-on-one" relationship with God. But faithful ministers who use this expression have a totally different concept in mind than have certain ones who left the organization. To us, it simply means that each Christian has direct, *personal contact* with God.

But some use the "one-on-one" concept to mean that every believer not only has a direct relationship with God, but that he can by-pass the authority vested in God's ministers.

According to this concept, they teach that God's ministers have interposed themselves as "mediators" between God and the believer. What it all boils down to is "church authority." By wrongly asserting that the ministers are "mediators" (which we definitely are not) they thereby convince some that they don't have to look to or

"obey" those whom Christ has set in authority in His Church.

I believe the Devil is trying, insidiously, to *insinuate* his satanic "no authority" doctrine alongside this "one-on-one" concept.

There is nothing wrong with the expression "one-on-one," but the danger is the subtle insinuations which have accompanied this concept. It is diabolical for anyone to *insinuate* that we ministers have placed ourselves as *mediators* between God and His people.

Is the "one-on-one" concept unbiblical? No, not if rightly understood.

But on the no-authority-in-the-church concept which has been fostered alongside it is very diabolical. Believers do have *direct* access to God: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Other scriptures show that we are now the begotten sons of God and, as such, have direct, personal access to the Father.

Even Christ taught us to pray "our Father which art in heaven," and this shows that all of us have access to that great Being who sits on His high heavenly throne, with His hands on the controls of the whole universe.

Each person does have direct, intimate access to God, and does not need to go through any *human mediator*, go-between or intermediary such as "the virgin Mary" or anyone else. "For there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).

Perhaps those of us (myself included) who have used the expression "one-on-one" have not fully realized the false doctrinal ideas being *insinuated along with this expression*. Satan has *misused* this "one-on-one" concept (just like he misused the name of Christ) but he always puts a *perverted twist* on its meaning — to deceive people into rejecting the *Government of God*.

The insinuations which have all too often accompanied the "one-on-one" concept are as follows: *Human* beings should *not* exercise authority over fellow church members. There should be no *human-exercised authority or government* in the Church of God.

Satan well knows that if he can get people to throw aside "church government" then he can lead them into ever-widening, ever-deepening paths of error.

One of the proponents of the just-you-and-God concept recently made the following comment: "There are those who demand that mankind needs *human mediators* to direct them to *church orga-*

nizations, or to the ritual of *circumcision*, or to *baptism*... All a person must presently do is to simply put his complete trust and *faith* in Jesus Christ. Such a person automatically has a direct *one-on-one* relationship with the Father, through Christ, no matter to what *race* or to what *church group* he belongs." Presumably, according to this reasoning, all who accept the name of Christ are true Christians.

But the teachers of this doctrine insidiously *insinuate* that God does *not* set various ones in His Church for the purpose of admonishing, correcting, and *ruling* over the members of the Church.

They would have you believe that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, elders and deacons either *do not exist* in the organizational structure of God's Church, or else have *no authority* whatsoever.

We are accused of setting up "human mediators" when we tell the brethren to follow the ministers *as we follow Christ*. But didn't Paul say "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1)? Did not Paul tell Timothy, Titus and the other evangelists and elders under him to exercise loving *authority* in order to avoid division, chaos and disintegration in God's Church?

God's Word commands: "Obey them that have the *rule* over you, and *submit* yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 clearly reveal that God has set ministers in His Church — to teach, admonish, and (when necessary) to correct and to *rule* in loving wisdom. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11, 12).

The New Testament clearly teaches that God ordained (through the hand of *men*) other human beings into his ministry, and gave them *authority* to *rule* His Church in love and in wisdom.

But nowhere in the New Testament does it ever *insinuate* or imply that such ministers were "human mediators." There is but *one Mediator*, Jesus Christ.

What then are God's ministers? We are *servants, overseers, "helpers."* God's ministers do not have dominion over the *faith* of the believers. "Jesus (not man) is the *author and finisher* of our *faith*" (Heb. 12:2).

We ministers are servants, overseers, shepherds — instructing, guiding and encouraging God's people — pointing them constantly toward Christ — *helping* them along the path toward God's kingdom.

We are *not mediators*, nor have we ever claimed to be: "Not for that we have *dominion* over your faith, but are *HELPERS OF YOUR JOY*: for by faith (in God) ye stand" (II Cor. 1:24).

Have God's true ministers ever taught that His people could not enter the kingdom of God unless they went to God *through us* — using his ministers as *mediators*? Absolutely not. We constantly point God's people to His Word, to Christ — and *away from ourselves!* But we know that God's people need to be guided, directed, taught, admonished, corrected and helped in every right way possible.

Yes, we believe in a "one-on-one" relationship with God. But the biblical concept of such a *direct* relationship with God does *not* by-pass His ministers. There are many deceivers who would have God's people thumb their noses at His ministers, do their own thing, and utterly refuse to "obey them who have the rule over you."

God does not teach the just-you-and-God idea — the concept that members should by-pass His ministers. God places His ministers in the Church to teach, correct (if necessary), encourage and guide His little ones into His Kingdom.

We are ministers, servants — not mediators. When we use this "one-on-one," extra-biblical terminology, let us make sure we understand it and use it rightly.

— Raymond F. McNair
PT/GN Senior Editor
Pasadena

PHOTOS — AND CHANGE

Take down a photo album of your children — they are a lot of fun to look at, aren't they?

What parent doesn't get a "kick" out of seeing the way his child looked months and years ago — as a baby, pre-schooler, third grader, and so on. The feelings evoked are generally positive ones — amusement at the childish antics brought to mind, fond memories of that camping trip, the outing to the beach — and then a deep satisfaction at the growth seen in the child.

But what parent looks at the picture of his teenager when he was only three and feels like ridiculing the way his child ate, played or maybe scribbled on the walls? Or what parent, with a nearly grown son who has become the star on a

local basketball team, has feelings or repulsion and regret at how awkward the boy was just two years before? Might not he grin, or even chuckle a little, when he recalls the boy who was previously all thumbs and knees? The real pleasure, maybe even a little pride, is with the maturing, growth and development he can see.

Our feelings about the changes in God's Church should be the same as a parent viewing his child's progress. Change and growth are expected and are a cause of elation and joy. Changes in the Church should also be a source of satisfaction for us. Just as a parent doesn't reflect in a negative way on his child's past childishness, neither should we reflect in a totally negative way on the Church's past "childishness."

Our comments about change, growth, and the way the Church used to do things can easily be taken as slams and as being derogatory if we are not careful. We don't ridicule the New Testament Church for its lack of understanding in certain areas — and neither should we ridicule ourselves for our past immaturities and faults. The past at least gives us something to compare with so we can see our growth in clearer perspective and as a chance to learn from experience what may not have been learned otherwise.

Possibly some of the instability some members have felt is due to what we have said about our past approach in many areas — and virtually tearing it apart rather than helping them realize it was a stage in our growth toward more maturity.

Maybe we can help our congregations to grin a little, or even chuckle, when we all look at the "photos" of the way we were, and feel a great deal of satisfaction at the growth we can see — and look forward to even greater maturity in the future.

— Garvin L. Greene
Muncie, Indiana

ADVENTURE OR TRIBULATION?

When was the last time you worked up a good sweat? I mean, when did you get dripping wet with perspiration? If you work out in a gym once in a while or enjoy a vigorous game of basketball or handball, you know how good it feels to get your blood moving and your brow moist. I think there is nothing quite like sharing a cold beer in the locker room after a taxing workout. This article is not to get you to join the YMCA or the local health club. I want to make a point about our *approach* to our lives in God's Church.

It's amazing the dedication and effort many put into winning a game, either actively as a partici-

pant or vicariously as a spectator. When an athlete pits his skill against another athlete, or against the wind, waves, or even a mountain, we call it *adventure*. However, when a Christian struggles in a life of overcoming we call it *tribulation*. The emphasis on the former is on the hope of victory or accomplishment while the emphasis on the latter is on suffering or persecution.

I think the Work of God in this age is the greatest adventure in which anyone could ever be involved. The world is the arena, all are spectators, and we, the elect, are the participants or athletes who have answered the call to begin training for the first round. If we make it we win a crown. Not a gold medal, or a snapshot in a news magazine, but a crown of life and our name written in the book of life.

Millions as aspiring athletes are willing to endure back-breaking workouts, long hours of fatigue, and a routine of hard work to make it into a race. I am not the first to think of this analogy, of course. Paul was not insensitive to the superstars of his day (I Cor. 9:24-26). I feel we need to inspire those in our charge to look at the future — traumatic as we know it could be — not as a tribulation, rife with persecution, but as a *challenge* to accept, and as an adventure to train for and to be excited about. We need to be on the offense rather than on the defense. We need to be doers and not just hearers who tremble at the thought of trials and obstacles.

Why is it that when a man puts his life on the line for a physical goal we call it adventure, and yet if it is a spiritual goal we think of it as tribulation?

Years ago when I was an active skydiver, I looked at the risks it involved as elements enhancing the challenge of the sport. I took the sport of skydiving seriously, respecting the organization and those in charge. I knew my equipment and my abilities. But when it came down to why I jumped out of an airplane, I guess you could say that I enjoyed the adventure of it. I'm not advocating that we take up some dangerous sport. I'm saying that we are already involved in the greatest adventure ever to be entered. If we look at it as a challenge and an opportunity to develop skill and ability in the areas that really count, true spirituality and character, we will be able to go ahead; not with uncertainty and fear of the future, but with conviction and determination like a disciplined athlete.

— Larry Greider
Toronto West/Barrie,
Ontario, Canada

INPUT RE: "TO BAPTIZE OR NOT TO BAPTIZE?"

The baptism question in the March 11 *Bulletin* by Dennis Diehl was very interesting to me. I can remember sermons on repentance, baptisms, the laying on of hands and other sermons in which ministers would wade through the basic doctrines listed in Hebrews 6. I would like to see some input as Dennis suggested.

I've had the opportunity to assist three different Church pastors and have discussed the subject of repentance/baptism with several others. All of the men I assisted had entirely different approaches in their baptismal counsellings. Some are of the opinion that smoking must be stopped before baptism, while others feel you can quit smoking faster with the help of God's Spirit. I've heard of stories, for example, that one minister required a couple of fellows to sell their motorcycles before they could be baptized; another minister would give scriptural knowledge tests; for years some required women to stop wearing make-up before baptism; my wife had to write a biographical sketch of all her sins and look up all the scriptures pertaining to those sins (after completing the assignment she was told that she still wasn't ready) and, (I guess) most of this was done under the direction of Matthew 3:8: bring forth fruits befitting repentance.

I remember when I was a freshman in College that some students had a hard time getting baptized while other students seemed to get the matter taken care of in a few hours. The word soon got around as to which counsellor would provide the easiest and the fastest route to baptism. During my sophomore year, it seemed to me that the freshmen were having an altar calling. And when I asked one of the counsellors about it, he told me that sometimes God works this way.

To quote the editor's note after Dennis' comments, "requirements for baptism are simply real Godly repentance and true belief." Since the ministers are the ones who must determine if a person has the gift of Godly repentance, I wish there were a more unified opinion and agreement in practice. It doesn't seem proper that the most important step in an individual's life is handled so diversely and so radically.

My present opinion is that repentance implies "change." And we deal with change in a physical realm and in a spiritual realm. We make a distinction between bad habits and character flaws. It is difficult for me to think a person who really knows what salvation is and understands God's plan, is ready for baptism while he is a slave to a rolled weed.

The Schick Control Center aids hundreds of

people in quitting the ugly habit of smoking and most of them are not repenting to get baptized. Hundreds of people lose hundreds of pounds by joining the Weight-watchers, the Y.M.C.A. or other programs. Physical changes can be made before baptism that don't require God's Spirit. Showing up at a meeting on Saturday instead of Sunday, not eating unclean meats, losing weight, stopping the smoking habit, are all physical changes. The spiritual changes or the perfection of one's character *does* require God's Spirit. Apparently, the Church policy was subject to the interpretation of the Church pastor. I'd like to see some more input on this subject.

— Joseph Tkach, Jr.
San Luis Obispo, California

MORE ABOUT CHANGE PRIOR TO BAPTISM

The recent comments about baptizing someone who is smoking brought some further thoughts to mind. It has certainly been my understanding that a person doesn't necessarily have to overcome this problem prior to baptism. However, I feel there is a matter of balance that needs to be exercised. If we baptize everyone who is still smoking, we could easily baptize a lot of unconverted people. I guess that's obvious!

Looking back, I'm sure many will remember the list of "test points" a minister would cover with a baptismal counselee. In the process of maturity as a Church and ministry, we came to realize it was a matter of *attitude*, not a physical list of points of physical adherence. That was the other extreme. But let's not let our present approach become an extreme.

What I mean is this. Some people talk a good fight — they say the right words, but Christ said, "By their fruits you shall know them." The fruits of a repentant attitude are bound to manifest themselves in at least some physical changes. So I try to be sure a person is showing some of these fruits, but I don't go through a long list.

Actually, by the time the average person requests baptism, he pretty well understands what the Church teaches, and the minister pretty well knows what the person is doing. It really only takes 20 minutes or so to determine the depth of the individual's repentance, and maybe not that long.

So, back to the smoking aspect. Many have said they could overcome it if only they had God's Spirit. My personal observation has been that many in this category (probably at least half) do *not* overcome the problem after baptism. Others have. This shows the individual was not truly doing his best to overcome the problem, and until

he does, God isn't going to do it for him. I feel that a person ought to really make a sincere effort, and then if it appears he just can't do it on his own, he should be baptized. Could it be some people haven't really counted the cost? Maybe they put their cigarettes before God. Most people will quit tobacco if they want God's Kingdom *more*. Admittedly, some are just hooked hopelessly, and must have outside help.

As to how this jibes with not needing to tell a person everything that is expected of him prior to baptism, I've found that it usually comes up anyway. The individual brings it up. But it is highly possible it would not necessarily come up. I think we need to face this too, however. Some will say, "Why didn't you tell me more about what was expected before you baptized me?" This could happen if we make the present approach an extreme. I do feel what I'm saying is in agreement with what Mr. Armstrong said — it's simply a matter of balanced application.

There are several causes of overweight, not all of which are the individual's fault. Lust is a more subtle thing which occurs in degrees to all of us in one way or another. Or, at least, it's a constant battle against it. Smoking is a direct, obvious violation of the clear Biblical principle that we should not mistreat our bodies. It is also an offensive, dirty habit. In my mind it stands out in a slightly different way than matters like overweight, although I'll be the first to admit that something like gluttony could keep one out of the Kingdom, too.

It sounds like the fellow Dennis mentioned may be ready for baptism. However, if he could easily quit (mentioned as a possibility by Dennis) and knows it is not a good thing to smoke, could we call that real godly repentance? Of course, sometimes you have to give someone the benefit of a doubt, in which case the responsibility rests on their shoulders.

In case I'm out on a limb, I for one welcome strong disagreement. Paul practiced it when needed. I believe in tact and diplomacy, too, but as fellow ministers and men, we ought to be able to speak out a little. That's much better than privately harboring our private opinions about each other and about various matters, as we tended to do in the past. If someone wants to label me "CC" (conservative clod), I'd rather he did it because of my direct statements, rather than because of rumors he's heard! Also, expressing the various sides of an issue helps all of us to better see a balanced perspective.

— Larry Neff
Austin-Waco, Texas

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT TAKING PASSEOVER WINE VS. ALCOHOLISM

I would like to show another side of this subject which I think will show a profound insight into God's character that we may be overlooking regarding the question of an alcoholic taking the Passover wine.

Is God a God of rituals? Is God stymied in His plan because man — His children — is incapacitated to follow a prescribed act of allegiance? Is Christ going to hold us to a pre-requirement we can't fulfill due to illness, or emotions or incapacities just because of a symbol? God forbid God is a Father and wants to give us His Spirit and His Kingdom and will bend over backwards to see that it comes to pass if our *attitude* is right. All He really requires of us is an obedient attitude which can be shown in other ways if necessary. Christ said, Come unto me and I will give you rest

How can God give us that rest if He does not make allowances and exceptions for each individual where necessary, just as any human Father would. This issue of the *Bulletin* would not hold all of the exceptions God, through Christ, has made for certain circumstances. As an example, David, when he was hungry, took the shewbread, which was unlawful. Also, the priests laboring on the Sabbath (Matth. 12:1-10). The scripture says in Leviticus 23 that all should fast on the Day of Atonement, but can we believe that Christ intended the dying or the sick to fast? I think not. That command was for able-bodied individuals to realize the need for this fast. The command was for those, who by attitude, would not obey — not to force the incapacitated. Would we as Fathers force a sick child to fast, knowing his condition, just because we had set a law based on normal conditions? Somehow I feel that God is more understanding than that.

If we, as being evil, do good to those in need, how much more would God our Father? What about the command to attend the Feast of Tabernacles? Would God expect the dying, the disabled and the aged to travel hundreds of miles that would surely harm them, *just* to see that every living soul attends? No, I don't think so. If our God cannot give a man His Holy Spirit and maintain it without the act of drinking wine at the Passover where there is really a *legitimate* reason for abstaining, such as this rare case in question, then I think we limit God as some of the religions

of Christ's day did! Even in Acts 10 it shows how the Holy Spirit was given in an exceptional way because of sincere prayer. We find also in II Kings 5:18 an example of a converted man required to go into a pagan temple with his master because he was a slave. Was the slave to absolutely say No, and die, or ask God's forgiveness and mercy because he was in there under duress? His attitude hated it, but he was a slave under obligation to serve his master, so he cried out to God for forgiveness and God heard him.

For a man to be commanded or made to feel that his fears are not genuine and that he has to take wine at the Passover, only contributes to his fears with a new fear of being thrust out of the Kingdom of God. This would be cruel and unrealistic and out of context with all Christ stood for — having *mercy* and not sacrifice. If this person believed with all of his heart that Christ is the Son of God, I could in all confidence make an exception for him of not being able-bodied or minded — a case where the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. I firmly believe that Matthew 16:19 authorizes the ministry to make those rare exceptions: "Whatsoever we (the ministry) bind on earth, it is bound by Christ in heaven" (Paraphrased) — realizing that whatsoever is not of faith would turn out to be sin, and that only God can give the faith such as would be needed for healing.

— *Herbert Magoon*
Pueblo, Colorado

EX-ALCOHOLIC'S EXPERIENCE AT FIRST PASSOVER

I have been reading with interest the numerous letters in regard to alcoholics drinking wine on the Passover. Since there are a couple of former alcoholics in the Reseda congregation, I asked one to give me her feelings when she took the Passover last year. I believe we can understand her fears in the text of the letter which follows if we consider that she had not taken alcohol for some ten years. Her success served a witness to her husband, who was sure she'd lose her sobriety (he is not a member), and I feel evidence that it is possible for an alcoholic to take the Passover if done in faith and a deep desire to be obedient to God.

"Passover night, I had a sort of fear, excitement and deep desire to be obedient. A few times I wanted to break and run. Instead I prayed and became engrossed in the attitude and action of the foot-washing. Then the wine was passed — I was okay until the deacons actually got to me. Panic seized me and again I wanted to run. I silently

yelled out to God — ‘Help, you promised to sustain me if I was obedient!’ I drank the wine quickly. All I could taste was the alcohol. Then the instantaneous light-headed feeling and the craving for one more drink. I sort of looked around to see if anyone was watching me. Then I reminded God of my obedience and my lack of power. As Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread ended — so did my fight with alcohol. I no longer had the craving for one more. However, my knowledge of the situation and my own physical state is that I would go through a similar experience every time I received Passover. I now know that God is with me.”

This letter may be too late to be of benefit for this Passover, but I’m sure there will be other alcoholics wondering next year.

— Robert Cloninger
Reseda, California

MARRIAGE COUNSELING

I would guess that most everyone in the ministry would agree that marriage counselings (and the hopeful solutions to marriage problems) are among the most challenging, yet rewarding responsibilities of the ministry. In light of the very helpful information we’ve received recently concerning marriage and marriage problems through David Antion’s Pastoral Administration via the “MET Tapes,” I’d like to mention a couple of recent experience I’ve had in which some of these ideas really proved helpful.

One marriage involves a couple, both members of the Church for four years. They have had problems since their marriage some fifteen years ago and have counseled about it several times since they came into the Church. Until recently, most advice has proved futile, except to reduce tempers from a boil to a simmer. Now, with recent efforts, I am very pleased to note they are getting along probably the best they have since “their honeymoon was over.”

What did I tell them that hadn’t been said before?

Nothing! In fact I listened to them on several occasions for a total of perhaps ten hours. The husband once said “I guess what I need is another good chewing out,” but I gave neither of them any correction. My only advice was that if they were going to make any progress, each of them would have to face the problem as 100% his or her responsibility and quit worrying about who did what to who, and to seek and work out their own shortcomings while accepting the other “as is.”

As it has turned out the “listening technique”

has paid off; they talked about their marriage and I listened. My presence as a third party was the catalyst they needed to help them begin to listen to each other. All I found it necessary to do was ask leading questions about what they were trying to get across and it kept the conversation going real well!

Naturally, I’m still holding my breath on this one, but the progress so far is very encouraging.

The other marriage I referred to involves a member whose husband is not in the Church. They have been married for over twenty years, and had an “average” relationship before she came in the Church, but it has deteriorated since. Accepting their mutual invitation I spent a couple of hours with them listening to their various appraisals of their relationship. As it turned out, the husband had been fairly considerate of his wife and tried not to criticize her religion, but through the years a number of grievances had built up that he had never mentioned to her, some very understandable that pertained to her over-reactions to his observance of Xmas etc., and his nonobservance of the Sabbath, etc. I personally apologized to him for some of what I would call our “reactionary-conservative” actions of years past.

I have checked back with her on a couple of occasions since and she assures me things are going much better.

In connection with these two experiences I would like to mention a personal observation: in certain situations criticism or correction directed at one mate (usually it has been directed toward the husband), in the presence of the other mate can have a detrimental effect. On occasion I have seen such “dispensation by the ministry” used by the “unoffending” mate as leverage to support his or her cause in future battle, asserting that “since you haven’t done what the minister said, how can you expect me to respect you or do my part.” In working with an already weak marriage, it seems it’s usually necessary to reconstruct two main building blocks of marriage — love and respect. And sometimes in rebuilding respect it can be easier for both parties if that sometimes necessary criticism can be administered on a one-on-one basis.

— Robert Roufs
Grand Rapids, Minn.

LONG-TIME MEMBERS NEED VISITING TOO

If there is any group of people *neglected* by the ministry to one degree or another, that group probably consists of LONG-TIME MEMBERS, often

elderly and somewhat inactive when it comes to Church functions and activities. Granted, that statement may not hold true in some areas, but it does seem to describe a definite trend that has taken place the last several years.

As we all know, prospective member visiting commands a high priority as does the PM follow-up visit and the baptismal counselling visit. Another high-priority visit is the problem or crisis visit. And usually, just as in the business world, 20% of the people give you 80% of your "business." It seems there is always a "squeaky wheel" to "grease."

A certain degree of contact with many in the Church can be maintained through Spokesman's Club, Youth Clubs, Bible Studies, sports activities, and Church socials. The above and many other responsibilities seem to take more than all our time. Yet the responsibility to the faithful, long-time member remains. Generally, those in this category have few if any problems and require very little attention.

It would be safe to say that the number of members who have not had a minister "darken their door" for 4, 5, or 6 years or more is greater than most of us would like to think. How many of us even know all the *names* of everyone, especially the little old widow, the "wall flower," those who are less well-off, less educated, and less outgoing?

Some years ago, a member could expect a visit from the minister on a somewhat frequent basis. In certain cases, the ministry undoubtedly was actually resented for his too-frequent presence and the feeling of being "checked up on" that was generated. When this trend was recognized, the "policy" of not visiting unless a request was made was instituted. Neither side of the ditch is correct.

As recent trends indicate, more of the long-time members left the Church than did the newer ones. There are many reasons for this, of course, but one reason in many cases has to be because the individual had no contact, relationship or rapport with the minister. If for no other reason than for "insurance," long-time members need the contact of the ministry. They need a rapport and the feeling that someone still cares. With personal contact, it would be much easier for many to adapt to the changes and understand the reasons why.

The "official" ministerial visit is not what is needed. The casual, social approach fills the bill nicely. A genuine, relaxed rapport will be established. People will then automatically relate to the minister, the Church, and the Work.

Long-time, faithful members deserve a blue ribbon for the support and service they have given

this Work. In fact, they deserve a little prestige!

An investment of *time* now will pay rich dividends later!

— Ray A. Meyer
Akron AM & PM, Ohio

WHAT KIND OF FRIEND ARE YOU?

Sometimes it's painful to have friends isn't it? The more closely your life is linked with that of another the more difficult it is to cope with any deviation from the pattern of behaviour to which you have become accustomed. If someone, to whom you are personally very close, leaves the Church — for whatever reason — it's *very* difficult to accept. With the loss of over 2000 of our brethren within the last year or so many of us have lost friends who were extremely dear to us. Some in the ministry have found that some of our closest associates are no longer with the Church — physically or philosophically. For one reason or another they have been totally alienated from the Church in general.

And it hurts! Deep down into the very innermost parts of our being it hurts. Many of us have wept buckets of tears (figuratively speaking) wishing things could be as they used to be — in the "good old days." But they never will be. Times and circumstances have changed. It's a whole new ball game now.

Hopefully, all of the major trauma is now water under the bridge.

But it still hurts when you see an old friend on the street and you realize that you no longer have the same frame of reference. The attraction is still there — but somehow things are different.

God does say, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

But he *also* says, "A friend loves at *all* times, and a brother is *born for adversity*" (Prov. 17:17, RSV). I don't love my friends any less because they have left. I don't, in any way, feel superior to them. I still consider myself a friend and I guess I always will.

BUT, that does not mean I agree with their position or their action. In most cases I vigorously disagree! But I'm not going to forsake them just because I disagree. If they need me I'm going to be available. This is the time of their "adversity." They are the ones who are undergoing a severe trial. Their belief, their faith, their physical and spiritual security, have, in many cases, been threatened and shaken. They are the ones who have been alienated.

Don't misunderstand (that's not an order — just a plea!). I'm not so naïve that I don't recog-

nize the fact that we have some internal problems yet to solve. But how can anyone help solve them by leaving? The place to resolve our difficulties is *right here* in the arms of "Mother Church" (cf. Gal. 4:26). I don't really care the nature of the problems or how many there may be. Here I stand and here I fight.

All right, so that's a little melodramatic. Maybe it is even somewhat unrealistic. But I mean it. I believe it's the right course.

Let's get back to the issue of friendship. I don't want to be a "fair weather friend." I don't pick my friends for personal advantage. I select my friends because I *like* them and appreciate them.

I think good friends should be candid and honest with each other. Doesn't God say, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend . . ."? If I'm wrong I expect my friends to tell me so to my face. (They usually do!). I don't appreciate a "friend" who maintains a facade of friendliness to my face and tears me down to others behind my back! And neither do you. Such a person is not a friend — he's a *Judas*!

"There are friends who *pretend* to be friends, but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24, RSV).

Once a friend, always a friend. A "separated brother" — perhaps. But *always* a friend!

I don't think it's Christian to abandon a friend the instant he or she begins to have a "problem" — spiritual or otherwise. I think that's the time a person needs a friend *most*! James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled . . . is this . . . to visit orphans and widows *IN THEIR AFFLICTION . . .*" (Jas. 1:27, RSV). Granted, this is most likely referring to physical affliction such as sickness. But the principle — the spirit — of that instruction is abundantly clear. People need help when they are down — not when they are at their "best state" and riding high.

James also wrote, "My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way *will save his soul from death* and will cover a multitude of sins"!! (Jas. 5:19, RSV).

That's true friendship!

— Brian Knowles
GN Managing Editor
Pasadena

NEEDED: MORE SPIRITUAL PUNCH!

After reading Mr. Ted Armstrong's letter in the March 11 *Bulletin* about preaching strong,

dynamic messages from the pulpits of God's Church, all I could do was rejoice!

I feel there has been a tendency of late on the part of some to intellectualize away some of the true meat of God's Word. I think some of us have tended to think more upon our human reasonings and how eloquently we can put forth the Gospel, rather than thinking about its message. God's Word doesn't need our artificial dressing of it, it simply needs to be written and preached with total conviction. As the Apostle Paul put it, "As I believe, therefore I speak." I hope that God's peoples' faith has not become void through some of our philosophies and knowledge "falsely so called."

I'm guilty many times, as others of us are, of the same problem the Athenians were indulging in. As Luke explained, "For the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing." This trend has not only been apparent in some sermons, but also in some of our literature and the ministerial tape program. In our quest to make the Gospel more palatable, I'm afraid we've dulled some of the razor sharp edges of God's Word. God's Truth is to penetrate through people, yet some of our articles, I feel, couldn't "slice through warm butter." I'm very sorry if I sound overly critical, but I do feel our preaching of the dynamic message of Christ has suffered in some aspects due to this recent influx of intellectuality. I'm not throwing stones, I'm simply expressing what I hope will be some edifying ideas. If I understand my Bible correctly, God is still calling the "weak and foolish of the world," not the pseudo intellectuals who I feel we've been catering to. Maybe it's my lack of grey matter, but I had difficulty understanding the latest M.E.T. treatise in the *Bulletin*: "The Essential Elements of Faith." I feel that some of our textbook reasoning can erode away the deep personal meaning of faith. I know I'm not alone in my feelings, I've heard others express similar views. I don't mean to accuse or berate anyone. I simply feel we've swerved away from some of our initial purposes. I believe that we as God's ministers should be answering questions, not "ministering them." Jesus Christ called fishermen and publicans to preach His message because they could identify with the mainstream of society. Please let's not lose our ability to relate to the masses.

Paul warned the Corinthians that they were veering away from the "simplicity that is in Jesus Christ." I hope we are not guilty of intellectualizing away the simplicity of Christ's message.

We, as God's ministers, need to get back to the basics; we need to show our congregations that we're firmly rooted and grounded in this way of life. We must show them our conversion is not superficial! We need to take a long hard look at our preaching, cutting through the layers of callous that keep us from improving, and start, if we are not already, preaching and feeding God's flock the "meat" of His Word. Paul realized the huge commission that was placed upon his shoulders, which is why he could make the following statement: "WOE is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." And I'm positive he didn't preach it in a weak, tasteless, flat, insipid way. Jeremiah wrote, "CURSED be he that doeth the work of God negligently." God gives His ministry a two-fold commission, if I understand Ezekiel 3 correctly. First he tells us to warn the sinners, or the world, and secondly he tells us to warn the righteous, who, if my understanding is right, are the people of God, His Church. We're to warn God's people about sinning, which may at times mean raising our voices, just as if we were warning someone who was about to walk on thin ice. We're to keep God's people strong in the Truth. If we fail to do this, their spiritual blood is on our heads!

God's people in recent time have been "bleating" out for stronger sermons. Let's give them what they so desperately need — what they've been hungering and thirsting for. I've heard some men say, "they don't know what they need." when someone says that it's tantamount to telling a starving Indian, whose stomach has protruded to the shape of a watermelon, and who has begged you for a handful of crumbs, "Ah, you don't know what you need." The illustration may be a bit dramatic, but I think it gets the point across. Jesus Christ commands His people to hunger and thirst after righteousness, so let's give them the benefit of the doubt when they tell us they're hungry.

I got to writing down so many of my feelings here that I hope they make some sense. I love my job and I love God's people, and I continually pray for you fellows. Let's get together and unitedly decide to strengthen God's people each week with inspiring, encouraging, uplifting and dynamic messages. Let's not take the attitude that I heard one man express: that it's not our job to inspire our congregations because they should be able to inspire themselves. This is a tragic attitude. It's not demeaning, nor is it a sin to raise your voice during a message; in fact it's commanded in the pages of the Bible! It's not wrong, and it certainly shouldn't be embarrassing to show our congregation true righteous indignation and yet be able

also, with tear-glistened eyes, to preach a moving sermon on God's love. If a man is not capable of showing to his church that he is emotionally and wholeheartedly involved in his message (and God's people can tell when their minister is moved), then maybe he is in the wrong job. Of course, I realize there must be balance, but if I read my Bible correctly, the apostles were men of heartfelt emotion, and they were that way because they strove to follow in the very footsteps of their Savior. It's a shame if some equate balance with noninvolvement.

And as we collectively unite to give more moving and meaty sermons, let's also take to heart what we preach. I have found that it is so easy to preach, but not to listen. Reminds me of what Paul once said, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that PREACHEST a man should not steal, dost thou steal?"

well, I better end this now before I go off on another subject. It sure has felt good to get some of these feelings off my chest — it's been a great thrill talking to you. Let's keep praying for each other, and let's go out and meet the challenge of being an effective minister of Jesus Christ!

— Patrick Glynn
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

THE MANY FACES OF SIN

When did you last give to your congregation, or to an individual for that matter, the definition of sin?

We have always put great emphasis upon I John 3:4 which says that sin is the transgression of the law. In our desires to prove a point concerning the fact that the law is not abolished and that it is a sin to transgress it, I'm afraid some very vital points are being missed in showing people the way to Christian living.

Many sermons have been preached pointing out that the average Protestant church member doesn't know the definition of sin. We proceed then to point out that, to them, sin is alcoholic drink, dancing, card playing etc. What poor ignorant creatures they are — they don't even know that the Bible gives the definition of sin in I John 3:4. Yes, this is true, but have you ever stopped to think that this is only a third of the truth, so to speak, or maybe just one fourth?

We have been so concerned about upholding God's law that I think we have greatly neglected some very important principles concerning it.

Had you ever stopped to consider that the Bible gives four distinct definitions of sin? You may

think, "Oh yes! but they all have to do with transgressing the Ten Commandments. No, they definitely do not, unless of course you lump all the law into one word — love. When you do this then the points of the law are abolished and we are back to Protestantism once again.

What, then, is sin in all of its meaning?

First, let's realize that sin basically falls into two broad categories. First is the sin of *commission*. In this it is obvious we commit a crime — we break a law by committing a forbidden act, etc. This is the sin we commonly refer to which is pointed out in I John 3:4. Another definition having the same basic meaning is found in I John 5:17 which says, "All unrighteousness is sin." This of course is, as we all know, another way of saying, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Since righteousness is the keeping of the commandments (Ps. 119:172) here, then, we have two very distinct definitions of sin.

I said there were four. What are the other two? These are the sins of *omission* and they may be, in our church, the very most dangerous because of emphasis as pointed out earlier. I do not recall personally in my 22 years in the Church of hearing a great deal of emphasis put upon this type of sin committed in our lives. Perhaps it is high time we emphasized some of these things in strong sermons.

Romans 6:23 is so very often tied to I John 3:4. Not one time have I ever heard it related to James 4:17 or Romans 14:23. Here then, we have sins of omission. Does not Romans 6:23 apply to these just as much as to I John 3:4 and 5:17? These, then, are perhaps much more dangerous in the lives of all of us than the former. Why? Because we are much more conscious of the law in its ten major points. Here is where the emphasis has been placed. James 4:17 says, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin." It is a sin for people not to pray for each other, but how many times is emphasis put on the fact that they are SINNING if they don't? James 4:17 tells us what "pure religion" is. To carry this out is doing good. How many people are told that they are sinning if they don't do good? I Timothy 2:15 tells us to study to show ourselves approved unto God. This is good and people know that they should, but are they made aware that they are sinning if they don't?

There are scores and scores of direct statements in the Bible that show how we can do good. We sin if we are not making every effort to carry them out. The *fact* that sin is involved is the point that needs emphasis now as never before!

It is interesting to note in this connection that those Christ places on His left hand described in Matthew 25:34-41 are guilty of sins of OMISSION — NOT ONE point of the law is mentioned as being broken. They may have been keeping all the law in the letter, at least, and yet they are lost.

Those placed on His right hand are those who are not guilty of the sin defined in James 4:17. They are doing good by 1) Helping the sick 2) Caring for strangers (how often is this emphasized?) 3) Visiting the sick 4) Visiting those in prison. These, of course, are only a few of the ways in which we can do good. And they were enumerated by Christ which shows their tremendous importance in the life of the average true Christian. How well do those of your congregation measure up to being free of this sin?

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." This is, as shown earlier, a sin of omission. In general, our primary application of this has been with respect to offending a weak brother which Paul illustrates clearly in I Corinthians 8:13. There are many other ways in which people may be committing sin in this way so some *thorough* and complete explanations of examples are in order, I am sure, in most congregations.

In Isaiah 59:2 we are told to "cry aloud and spare not, showing my people their sins." We always relegate this scripture to "The World Tomorrow program" — speaking to the "world" as we term it. I wonder if it doesn't have a much deeper meaning for us today — how much and what way are our people being shown their sins? Are we really "crying aloud and sparing not," OR are we delivering the soft, smooth, oratorical sermons to please the ear lest we offend?

The blood of any people who fall into the category described in Matthew 25 will fall on somebody's head. Could it be yours?

— Norvel V. Pyle
Big Sandy, Texas

LETTER COMMENTS

(Continued from page 185)

loving lesson to help us give more love to others in whatever way it manifests itself. Please, whenever possible send God's children your tapes as they provide us with so much more than your broadcasts.

— Al Alonso
San Antonio, TX

Less Fortunate?

I wish to tell you that here in Australia we are a hundred per cent behind you and pray that God

(Continued on page 200)

Ministerial Education & Training

THE CHALLENGE OF WORKING WITH YOUTH

Recently during after dinner conversation with two families of teenagers, as the talk droned from this week's weather to last year's mild winter, the minister looked over at a disinterested 15-year-old and asked rather abruptly, "How much do you have to pay for an 'upper' at school?" Open-mouthed surprise was delayed for a moment and the perfunctory response was, "Two bucks can get ya an upper but there's all prices and all kinds." Needless to say, a very animated conversation followed. Stunned parents stared, eyes bouncing back and forth with tennis match intensity. The kids confessed to being tempted, but said they didn't really want to waste themselves on them and couldn't afford them.

One teen later summed up the dinner conversation this way: "I don't know why, but before tonite I just felt he didn't like us. It seemed Mr. _____ (another minister) cared about us more."

Result: 4 informed parents, 2 very turned-on teens and 1 minister GENUINELY INTERESTED who stuck a lot of domestic and ecclesiastical glue on 6 people.

It is this type of genuine interest, which teens seem to have an uncanny sixth sense for, that is just one of the vital ingredients in determining a youth's future relationship with the Church.

The challenge of working with youth confronts each minister. Some take to it naturally and enjoy the challenge. Others view the challenge as a game that doesn't count, "the sport that they never really liked anyway," or "the tallest grape that was most assuredly sour." Much as many would like to, the challenge of youth cannot be talked away. As has been stated many times in several different fashions — "Kids are gonna get their knocks anyway — why try?" "I'm not the type to fool with youth activities." "I'm a preacher, not a youth director."

Yet, let's look at our youth situation and see why it's not only a challenge but a crucial link that affects the health and the future of the local church.

First of all, putting it simply, *sour kids make*

sour families and families are all your church is anyway. The youth cannot be treated as a separate problem whose ill affects go unfelt. Naturally, it would be easy to say, "They're a separate hassle." But, as in any human effort there is a complex interdependence. Easily dismissed and bypassed, the youth problem could rotate as a far-off satellite, unimportant and unnoticeable. But . . .

Amazing as it may seem, there are approximately 10,000 teenagers attending church services across the U.S. and around the world on any given Sabbath. Viewed negatively — perhaps from a pastor who has more than his share of teen problems — this group might be regarded as just that many more migraine headaches with which the church must cope.

Yet viewed positively, this group of young people are in reality a vast pool of prospective members. They are a potential "second harvest" that, if effectively dealt with, can be consolidated into thousands of additional units of stable church membership in the months and years ahead.

By accepting the challenge — and it assuredly is a challenge! — the perennial fruit of our efforts today would be the addition of increasing numbers of young family units to the Church of God, and there would be the additional benefit of the infectious spirit of hope and optimism inherent in a group who had been properly motivated and dealt with in the impressionable and difficult teen years.

No Automatic Clout

The members feel they have an obligation to listen to you. Depending upon your style and presence, they feel to one degree or another an ingrained loyalty to the Church. Teens, on the other hand, feel little obligation. Oh, they know you're a minister, but they haven't learned just how "important" you are yet. The challenge is yours. By virtue of colorful speaking charisma or personality you can muster the human tools and methods to make their association (and that's all it is) with you and with the Church at least not negative and hopefully pleasant.

The key word is "CARE." Not "care" as in "I care that I've got a cold," "I care because you brats can make a lot of migraines" or "I care because I'm supposed to." But concern that is manifested by PERSONAL INTEREST. Just Christ-like "forbid not the kids to come unto me" interest. So what if you've got a youth coordinator who does the leg work? We can still be at the youth campout. We can still dunk a few heads at the lake. We can still try out the skis, toss a few

snowballs, sing some songs (that aren't circa 1940).

Another word which becomes crucial is "GENUINE." Not genuine mistrust or genuine superficial patronizing patter but genuine interest. Yes, you've got to be honest. Kids are in the stage when they *think* they can see through everything. Whether they can or not (although they can be penetrating) isn't the problem. Since they think they're grown up, try to treat them with a healthy degree of peer level conversation. They can respond with originality and freshness and perhaps be a little too clever for you. Try it.

Of course, PROGRAMS are essential. To a large degree they should be *self-activated*. Their ideas coupled with your own or the coordinator should be encouraged. Then activities should be planned with at least some degree of regularity or consistency. This is *not to say* they must be *FREQUENT*, just planned so that the teens have a feeling of belonging.

The sad thing with the whole youth problem is that it's often viewed with nonchalance and indifference. If instead we could view the situation as one with *many positive benefits*, we wouldn't then think of them as teenage brats, but as near adults. They are potentially very solid members.

The fact that God calls is undeniable, but the human factor in that call is equally undeniable. When we consider the numbers of those teens who, after coming of age never darkened the doors of the church again, or the number of older teens who were sons and daughters of PMs who, after coming 1 or 2 times never showed up again, we must pause and ask — could we have done better? Could we have created a warmer and more enthusiastic environment? Could we have had better viable programs, tending to draw the children of PMs in — giving them something to which to belong?

If we felt that this Work could go on for generations without interruption our thinking would perhaps be different. We would be viewing those younger ones in a totally different perspective. At the local level we'd have total programs from 6 to 60. This is not being suggested, but the point is that we do tend to slip into a certain mentality that hopefully we can investigate without emotion. It should be sufficient to say that we should view our youth as more valuable — more precious. They are in-house treasures — resident PMs — that have started in the Church and then in many cases leave. The eternal consequences are debatable; but psychologically and emotionally the return is very difficult to make once they've decided to "split."

If we say that this is a *way of life* and not just *religious dogma* then we can surely view ourselves as "salesmen of life" and not just men of the cloth. The teen is hard to convince many times, but that just makes it more of a challenge.

We're in the faith, hope and charity business so let's look at the challenge of youth with the same enlightened optimism that puts us in back of a microphone each Sabbath.

This challenge requires real solutions, real programs, real interest and quality. No, we're not reform schools, social workers or YMCA directors. But we are the ministers of Jesus and the advance guard of a new social order — and youth fit smack dab in the middle of those two jobs.

— Chris French

LETTER COMMENTS

(Continued from page 198)

will give you and your father health, wisdom, power, knowledge and financial help to finish His Work. I know He will.

I love you, your father, the ministers, the Work so much, it is a part of me or I am a part of it. I cannot express all my feelings.

Your cassette was so stirring! We wish you could send cassettes with your sermons from time to time to Australia. And why not! It wouldn't be much trouble to tape your sermons and send them to us!!

There are a lot of fortunate brethren who have seen and heard you. But the more or less unfortunate like me will never have the opportunity to hear you personally. Why not give us this blessing and send to Australia a cassette once a month!! If you only knew what it means to us, you would never refuse it!!!

I am enclosing a small donation.

— Nancy Kush
Melbourne, Australia

Sermons from Headquarters Are Special

Just want you to know how much I appreciate hearing the tapes sent out from Pasadena! (Sermons from you and Mr. Ted Armstrong). Thank you for sending them and please do this often. We love and appreciate our local pastor and his family, but we all including pastor and family consider sermons from Headquarters special and encouraging.

— Mrs. Clyne Phillips
Mars Hill, NC