

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

"KEEPING CURRENT"; POCKET CALENDARS; PRAYER UPDATES;
INTERNATIONAL NEWS--CARIBBEAN

"Keeping Current" With this issue of the "Pastor General's Report" we are pleased to be able to begin offering a new service to the ministry in the form of a copy of the Ambassador College Library's monthly publication titled "Keeping Current." "Keeping Current" will be a one-page insert included in your PGR envelope. It will serve to update you on articles of interest from current periodicals, as well as newly released books. This will save you some leg and eye work of seeking out relevant research materials for sermon and Bible study preparation.

Please realize, however, that the Library cannot provide copies of these materials for you. The purpose of "Keeping Current" is to make you aware of what is available so that you can obtain the material you may be interested in from a newsstand or from your local library.

Keep in mind that we do not, of course, necessarily endorse the views or facts presented in any of the books or articles mentioned. "Keeping Current" is merely an announcement bulletin. It is not an "official list" of "approved" or "sanctioned" books and articles. I hope that is clear. (I do not want to find that someone is propounding some point or subject from an article they saw mentioned in "Keeping Current" and then saying that the Church must have somehow approved of or agreed with the contents. The Church agrees with nothing except that which agrees with God's Word.)

We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Richard Walther in having this material compiled for our use.

Pocket Calendars Included with this issue are two 1986 pocket calendars, which give the dates of each of the Holy Days for the upcoming year. I hope you will find these useful.

Prayer Updates I am sorry to have to inform you that Mr. and Mrs. John Moskel's 3-year-old daughter, Molly, died this past Tuesday, December 17, from leukemia. Funeral services were planned for Friday morning

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in Wilmington, North Carolina. The Moskels have expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the concern and prayers on their behalf through this trial. It has now been determined that their two sons, Jesse, age 9, and Benjamin, age 6, also have beginning stages of the same disease. Let's all continue to pray earnestly for the Moskels, that God will comfort them and that He will intervene to totally heal their sons.

In last week's PGR, I mentioned that tests were being run to determine whether the tumor partially removed from Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Robertson's daughter, Jennifer, was malignant. The tumor is malignant. Please continue to remember the Robertsons in your prayers as well.

Through all these severe trials so many are experiencing right now, it is important that we keep our minds focused upon the true meaning of life, and on the reason God has made us temporary, physical beings, and what His sure promises are for the future. The apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 8:16-23, Revised Authorized Version:

The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. And not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

The rest of chapter 8 further calls to our minds the vastness of God's love and His all-encompassing purpose for us. Paul gives us great encouragement in verses 31-39, RAV:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's look to God for the encouragement and strength through His Spirit that we all need.

International News

From Stan Bass At the Regional Directors Conference in November, I had the pleasure of attending a social event at the home of evangelist Harold Jackson to which many students from the Caribbean had been invited. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there is a very fine representation of students from the Caribbean. From the English-speaking area alone there are two students from Antigua, two from Bahamas, two from Guyana (via the U.S.), two from Jamaica, two from St. Lucia, two from Trinidad and in addition there are two special students, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lowe of Barbados. Mr. Lowe is a local elder. In addition to these English-speaking students, there are students from the French and Spanish areas of the Caribbean, for whom English is a second language.

God has been granting encouraging growth to the English Caribbean churches. The need exists in the future for pillar members and potential employees in the Work. God seems to be providing a modest pool from which these needs can be met.

Earlier this month we held a mini-conference for Church pastors in the region. The agenda of the three-day conference dealt mainly with the just-concluded Feast and budget projections for the upcoming year.

Media figures for this month show a marked increase due mainly to excellent response in Trinidad. Overall we received a total of 1,821 television responses giving a cost per response of US\$10.54. Trinidad contributed 1,624 responses from their two television stations. We also had 338 radio responses at a cost per response of US\$26.91. Jamaica provided the majority with 252 responses.

God's Work in Trinidad has undergone exciting changes just recently. After years of trying, we were recently able to buy time on TTT-TV Channel 2/13. This occurred right after a visit by Mr. Stan Bass and BBDO representatives. The response has been overwhelming, with more than 1,200 in the first month alone. The new channel reaches all of Trinidad and Tobago and airs at the highly popular time of 9:00 a.m. Sunday. This development was closely followed by a move of the Trinidad office from its home of five years. The new facilities have ample office space on the ground floor and room upstairs for Bible studies, clubs, YOU meetings and choir practice. Its location in St. Augustine is ideally suited for the majority of the brethren and is easily accessible from all points in Trinidad. Office staff are able to work in quiet, well-designed areas for their various responsibilities. Perhaps one of the major advantages of the new office is its accessibility to phone lines. Instead of having just one line the Church now has three, all governed by a state-of-the-art computer phone system. Because of the system's "line-seeking" capabilities, responses to the program have been increased greatly. Some callers remarked that they had tried for months without success at our previous number. The dramatic difference was underscored on a recent Sunday morning when more than 150 calls were fielded in the two hours following the program. A total of 225 calls were received that Sunday. Previously, the office only received 400 calls in a month.

Mr. Clifton Charles and wife Pearl serve the church of more than 550. Mr. Charles is assisted by Mr. Lincoln Jailal and Mr. Mikey Mongul, a local church elder. In addition to the Port-of-Spain congregation, Mr. Charles is responsible for a church in Tobago and one in Grenada. Even though Trinidad is officially in a depression, the brethren are doing well and are not unduly plagued by unemployment.

--Joseph Tkach, Church Administration

FROM MUSIC SERVICES

In order to expedite the efficient delivery of the cassette album orders to U.S. members, Mr. Tkach has approved mailing in bulk to the church areas. To facilitate distribution to the members, we would appreciate your delegation of the task to a responsible individual.

Prior to receiving a U.P.S. shipment for your church area, you will receive a letter confirming what is being shipped, including a breakdown of the names of brethren who have made orders and a description of the type and quantity of each order. Please note that the shipment includes only back orders from the various U.S. Feast sites. Orders placed since the Feast are being handled as promptly as possible and are being shipped individually.

Please direct any questions or problems that arise to Mr. Rick Peterson or Mr. Joe McNair at Music Services in Pasadena. Thank you so much for your help in this matter. Not only will this process save a considerable amount of individual shipping costs but the delivery time will be considerably shorter.

**** TO BE READ IN ALL U.S. CHURCHES ****

Audio Cassette Albums

Due to the overwhelming response to our offer of Young Ambassadors' cassette albums, and also the choral and piano albums of the Bible Hymnal, it has taken more time than originally planned to fill all the orders received this past Feast. We are happy to announce that, by the end of December, all orders will have been shipped. In most cases we are bulk-shipping to the church pastors who will then arrange to distribute the albums as soon as possible.

Please resist the temptation to write or call regarding the whereabouts of your order. Rest assured they are "in the mail." If any brethren have not received their orders by the end of January then there may be cause for inquiry. We appreciate your patience and wish you many hours of listening pleasure.

--Ross Jutsum, Music Services

FROM EDITORIAL SERVICES

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY; CALENDAR; RESPONSE TO AIDS ARTICLE;
"GOOD NEWS" APPRECIATED**

Autobiography Mr. Armstrong has approved the reprinting of his autobiography, volume 1. He has asked for a completion date by April, 1986. Volume 2, which only appeared as a series in "The Plain Truth" in the 1960s, is scheduled to be printed in book form later in the year. Many of our members and certainly a number of co-workers have not had access to these valuable sources that describe the origins and development of God's Work. These important books also show how Christian principles can be applied in everyday life.

Calendar God's Sacred Calendar for 1986-87 should be available by the end of January. This 32-page full-color booklet will be mailed automatically to all English-speaking members, one per household, worldwide. The theme for the calendar will be "Mr. Armstrong as an Ambassador for World Peace." For those members who have checked their pocket calendar lately for Feast dates, they should be happy to know that a new updated pocket calendar will be inserted in the calendar.

Response to AIDS Article From Mr. Rice's area, we find much response has come in from Don Schroeder's article in the November-December "Plain Truth" on AIDS. Many commented that there has been a great deal of fear and confusion about AIDS and little reliable information written. Requests for multiple copies of the article have come in from medical personnel, college professors, parents and youth organizations. A few examples follow:

From Pennsylvania: "In the Nov.-Dec. 'Plain Truth' I read the article 'Sexually Transmissible Diseases' and thought it important and well-presented information. Would it be possible for you to send me some reprints of this article to circulate around college dormitories? We try to offer education in all facets of the students' lives."

From Georgia: "Your article is one that should be a subject for lectures in every school in our country. What would be the cost per booklet if we ordered them for educational purposes for student distribution? I feel that the only way we can stem the tide of this terrible epidemic is to emphatically educate our younger generation to the terrible heartache they will bring upon themselves by ignoring the dangers of promiscuity."

From North Carolina: "Your article is the most comprehensive, shocking and educational on the subject of 'AIDS,' etc. I would appreciate your sending me four copies that I might put each in the hands of our four children."

A reprint of this article is now being prepared to handle all the requests.

"Good News" Appreciated Letters from our "Plain Truth" subscribers also continue to come in thanking us for the offer of "The Good News." Let me share one with you that might interest certain football fans:

"For over a year, we've been receiving your 'Plain Truth' magazine, which we appreciate so much! Now, you're offering us still another gift in sending us 'The Good News'! Our thanks also to the persons responsible for not selling God's Word! Being a Dallas Cowboy fan, I might add that Tom Landry introduced me to 'The Plain Truth.'"

--Dexter Faulkner, Editorial Services

FROM FACILITIES ADMINISTRATION

Xian Exhibit's Success The Xian Exhibit, which was briefly covered in the November 18 edition of "The Worldwide News," was a tremendous success. Not only did it serve well as a cultural exchange between Ambassador Foundation and the People's Republic of China, but it also helped people throughout the Los Angeles basin to get a better perspective on China's history.

Thousands were attracted to the campus to see "The Secret Army of China's First Emperor," which was open from November 3 to December 1 in the Hall of Administration. Had the display not been in Minneapolis, Minnesota, earlier in the year, we would not have been able to have it here. Some things seem to just "work out" to our advantage.

Following are some verbal and written comments we received:

Fascinating and breathtaking; had to return twice to believe my eyes!

The exhibit was very well done, a lot of effort was obviously used in preparation of it. I found it fascinating and enjoyable, well worth the visit.

Fantastic! Even better in certain respects than the actual tomb in Xian.

This exhibition is very well done. I found it equal to that done at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York a short time ago.

Many of the thousands of viewers had never been on campus before, and did not know anything about Ambassador College, the Church or their purpose. "The Plain Truth" and "Youth 85" display stands in the Hall of Administration had to be refilled frequently and many booklets and reprints were picked up from the Student Center display stands.

The exhibit was given special coverage in all the newspapers in the area, including the STAR NEWS and LOS ANGELES TIMES. In addition, there was major coverage on NBC and two other local channels.

Ellis La Ravia, Facilities Administration

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Renewal Rates Up More "Plain Truth" readers are renewing their one-year subscriptions than ever before. The overall renewal rate of all subscribers has now increased from an average of 45%, several years ago, to about 55%. These are the highest renewal rates we have ever experienced for "The Plain Truth."

The best barometer of how valuable a magazine is to a specific reader is the magazine's renewal rate. At the end of a subscription term, readers are asked to "renew" their magazine subscription for another year. "Plain Truth" renewal rates have now reached record heights:

- * 43% of first-year subscribers are now renewing their "Plain Truth" for another year (compared to only 20% in 1977).
- * 75% of the readers on the file for more than one year are now renewing their "Plain Truth" (compared to 65% in 1977).

This indicates readers place a high value on the editorial content of the magazine. They want to continue their subscriptions because "The Plain Truth" has a positive impact upon their lives.

Ray Wright, Publishing Services

MAIL PROCESSING UPDATE

"MYSTERY OF THE AGES" TOPS 500,000; HUNDREDS REQUEST PRAYER; CHRISTMAS BOOKLET

"Mystery of the Ages" Tops 500,000 More than 400,000 subscribers have requested Mr. Armstrong's book "Mystery of the Ages." About half of these requests were from "Good News" subscribers. The other half are from those responding to the semiannual letter.

In addition, 100,000 copies of the hardbound version were automatically sent to members and co-workers. Thus, to date, one-half million copies have been distributed, or soon will be. This book is quickly becoming one of the most highly acclaimed and sought-after pieces of literature Mr. Armstrong has written.

Hundreds Request Prayer Many people who write or phone headquarters are facing devastating trials and problems. Increasing numbers are turning to the Work for comfort and encouragement and to request our prayers for God's intervention. For example, people with terminal illnesses; elderly people who have been deserted by their children; parents seeking help for their alcoholic or divorced children; unemployed persons who are facing severe financial problems; prisoners who feel lonely, frustrated and depressed; marriages where partners are unloving, selfish and cruel; homosexuals who are trying to repent.

These requests are sent to our Personal Correspondence Department. Each person receives a letter of encouragement based on his circumstances, which points him toward God and gives assurances from the Bible. We also offer the services of the local minister to those who are interested. So far this year nearly 3,000 prayer requests have been handled by this department.

Christmas Booklet More than 100,000 copies of Mr. Armstrong's booklet "The Plain Truth About Christmas" have been requested this year. The origin of this holiday is often startling and eye-opening to our readers. A number have written that they are no longer going to keep Christmas and are thankful to know the truth. Here are a few letters:

"I am a 17-year-old who has been learning so much about the world we live in by reading 'The Plain Truth.' A few months ago I received 'The Plain Truth About Christmas' booklet. I was shocked to learn that all these years we thought Christmas was about Jesus Christ and that Christ was not even born in winter!

"This will be the first year my family and I don't celebrate Christmas. I am so glad that I now know the truth about Christmas."

California

"Last week my teacher asked me why I keep Thanksgiving and don't keep Christmas. I am in the fifth grade. While I was thinking of a good answer, she said for me to go home and have my mom and dad help me with the answer. So that is what I did. We got 'The Plain Truth About Christmas' booklet out and went over it.

"While my mom was writing a letter to my teacher, I tore the flier out of the latest 'Plain Truth' that had Santa Claus on it, and we put it with the letter. The next day at school my teacher read my letter while I was at music. She said to me when I came back that my parents were right and that she was going to send in for that booklet."

Kansas

"I received and read your little booklet 'The Plain Truth About Christmas' and frankly, I am appalled at what I read. My husband and I are Christians, and of late we are trying to find out God's truth for our lives. And we are also learning that if we love God then we must obey His commandments.

"For many years Christmas has been a time of hardship and sacrificing. This holiday has been the source of financial problems and also brings the spirit of gloom, depression and sometimes loneliness and despair. My husband and I will not be deceived anymore."

Washington

"I have been a reader of your publications for a number of years, and have enjoyed the information contained in them very much. I moved September 1983, and lost some of my reading materials which I had received from you, in particular 'The Plain Truth About Christmas.' This has been a tremendous loss.

"Last December, during the 'holidays,' the loss of this booklet was particularly acute. I had no reference from which to intelligently discuss this subject with others. I would be exceedingly grateful if you would send one or two copies of this booklet to me if it is still in print."

Georgia

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center