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## MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

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### NEW MATURITY AND NEW BEGINNINGS

On Tuesday, May 18, more than 430 ministers of the World-wide Church of God from around the globe convened for a major three-day ministerial conference in Ambassador Auditorium, Pasadena, California. The more than 18 hours in meetings were characterized by Garner Ted Armstrong as signaling "new beginnings" for the Church.

The meetings began with a surprise announcement: the ordination of two evangelists. The newly ordained men were Dean Wilson, then director of the Canadian Work, and Ronald Kelly, executive vice president of Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas. The rest of the morning session was then taken up with addresses by the Armstrongs.

**Trunk of the Tree.** Herbert W. Armstrong rehearsed the formative years when he came to understand the Bible. "I was astonished to see [when he began his studies] that practically everything I had been taught as a boy in Sunday school was the exact opposite of what the Bible revealed. I had said: 'I know that the Bible says, "Thou shalt keep Sunday," because all of the churches do and they all get their religion out of the Bible — don't they?' What a great awakening it was to learn that they do not get their religion out of the Bible."

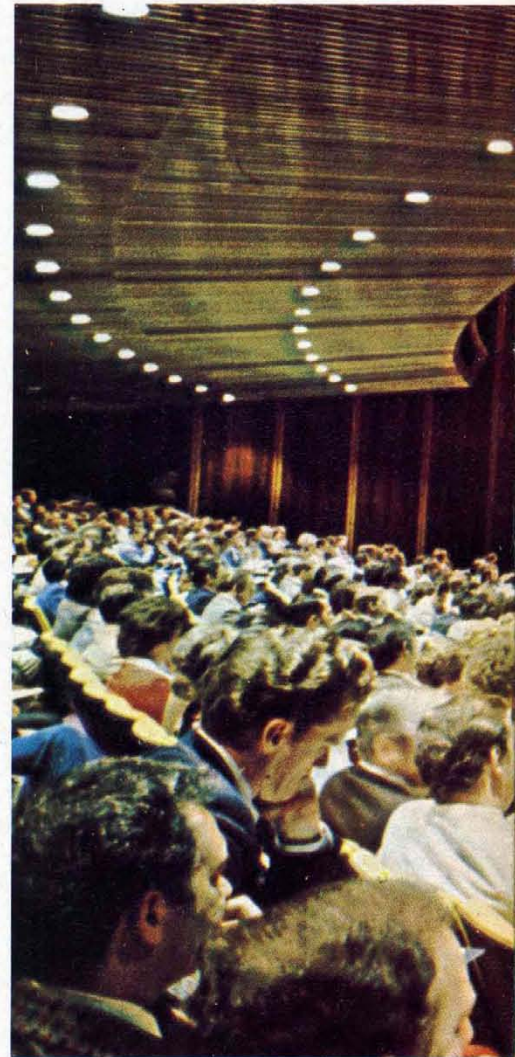
Over a period of several years, Mr. Armstrong step by step increased his knowledge of the Bible,

coming eventually to see that "the Kingdom of God is the trunk of the tree. Christ came to qualify to re-establish the Kingdom, or government, of God on earth. He came to proclaim or announce the coming Kingdom of God. That was the heart and core of His gospel." Mr. Armstrong emphasized the importance of getting that message to the world in this end time.

After reviewing God's plan of salvation and the urgent commission to proclaim the gospel, Mr. Armstrong turned to a discussion of his visits with world leaders — a development that is fulfilling that commission.

**Opening Doors.** "We had to start at the grass roots. But we found in recent years that when it comes to getting into larger nations outside the United States, the doors were often closed." Mr. Armstrong went on to explain how government control of the media and such factors as high illiteracy rates were obstacles in the path to proclaiming the gospel in other countries.

Then he continued: "About seven or so years ago, God began to gradually open doors to kings, presidents and prime ministers. . . . At first we didn't know why these visits were coming our way, but now it's quite clear. I'm not necessarily trying to get the message over to the head of state, or get him 'converted.' Really, these visits are a means of getting into that coun-

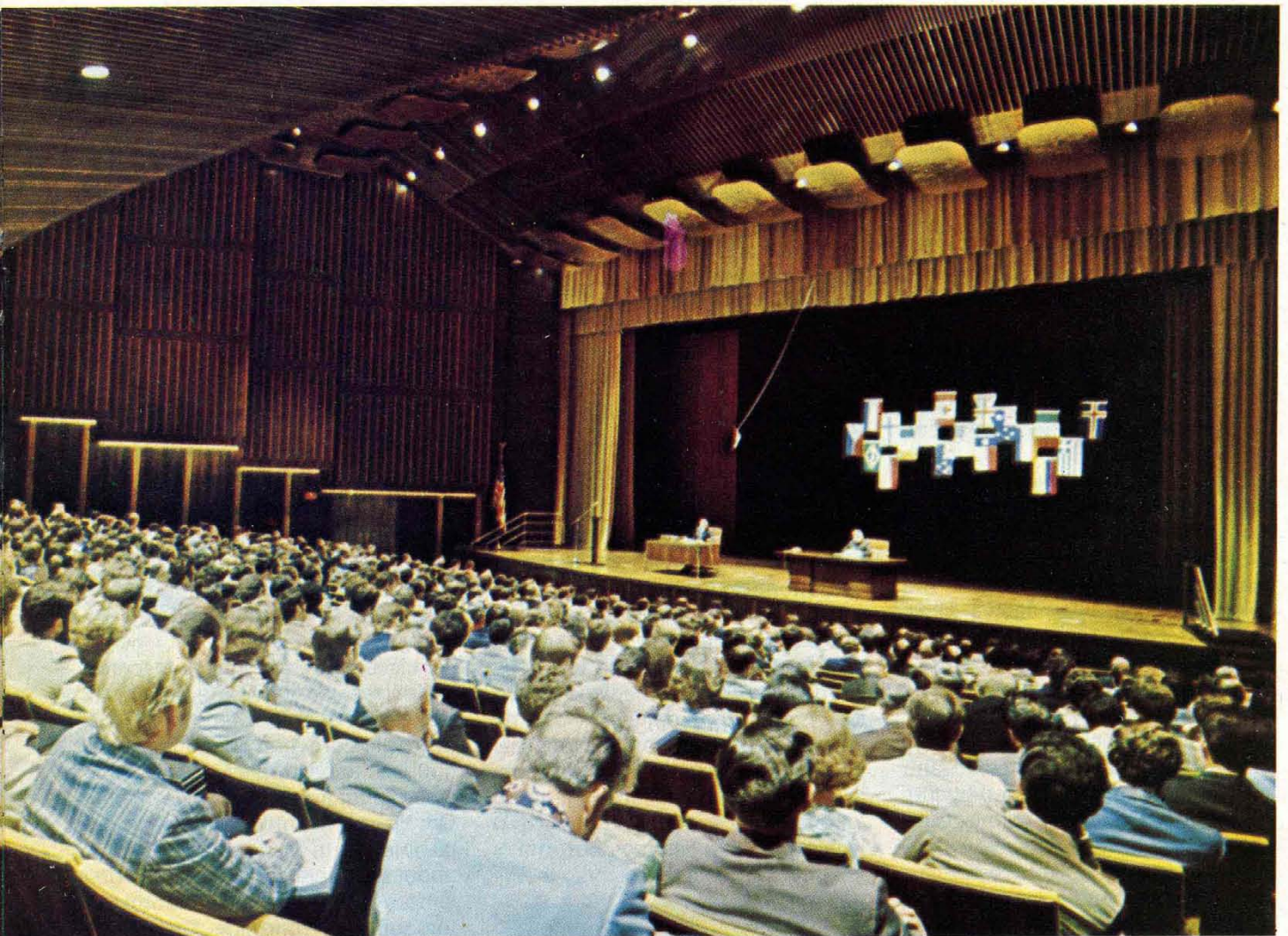


try. Other doors open through contacts with people in the governments of these leaders.

"In a sense, I'm pioneering. I'm opening the doors and others can follow through and get the message to these countries.

"God has given me such grace and favor in the eyes of heads of state that it's hard to understand — unless it is a miracle. . . . I have never taken any credit for the fruit borne. God built this Work — I didn't."

After some remarks by Stanley Rader (vice president for Financial Affairs and Planning) about Mr. Armstrong's travels and the projects of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Gar-



Warren Watson — GN

ner Ted Armstrong reviewed activities in the Work for the past year. Picking up a theme emphasized by his father, he reiterated that everyone — minister and lay member, employee and co-worker — has a part in doing the work.

**New Beginnings.** He went on to state that "the keynote of this conference ought to be new beginnings, a new start." He gave as examples of this new thrust forward the expansion of the number of radio and TV stations carrying the program, a new format change for the TV show with even greater biblical emphasis, and reorganization at headquarters and in the field ministry for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Herbert Armstrong, having to depart that afternoon for another meeting in the Middle East, closed out the morning session with a farewell address. He pointed out that "We're not trying to go out and see how many we can get converted. I have tried to get the message out as a witness. And I know that when we do that, God will automatically cause a lot of people to respond and get converted. But God has to do that."

**Helpers of Their Joy.** In the Tuesday afternoon session, the conference got down to nuts-and-bolts matters relating to the ministry. Garner Ted Armstrong spoke for half an hour on guidelines for certain doctrinal matters. Then Ronald

**MINISTERS** listen to "state of the Work" addresses in Ambassador Auditorium during the first session of ministerial conference.

Dart, vice president for pastoral administration, spent an hour outlining the proposed plan for ministerial development.

Ted Armstrong conducted the remainder of the session. First he discussed the role and effectiveness of the ministers, stressing the fact that they are to be "helpers of their joy — not policemen of their faith" (see II Cor. 1:24). He encouraged ministers to ask themselves: What kind of minister am I? What kind of counselor am I? Am I a good listener? Am I a compassionate person, con-

cerned with others? He stressed that ministers should *help* people — whether within or outside the Church — whenever they see a need, a problem, or an affliction. The afternoon meeting ended with a 40-minute session of questions from the floor.

The Wednesday morning session, May 19, was devoted to a discussion of several papers on doctrinal matters. These included healing, marriage, faith and financial responsibility, race and ethnic relations, and Sabbath observance. The afternoon was devoted to progress reports on various aspects of the Church.

On Thursday morning, several presentations were made relating to the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and its ancillary activities. Then came several reports from the International Division, and, finally, a report and video presentation by the Television Production Department.

**A New Maturity.** The final session, chaired by Garner Ted Armstrong, was predominantly devoted to answering questions submitted by the ministers on doctrinal and miscellaneous questions.

Mr. Armstrong closed the conference by expounding on several scriptures relating to the ministry. He read Ephesians 4:1-16, where the apostle Paul exhorts the Church to unity and spiritual maturity. Commenting upon verse 13 in particular, he said: "I've seen in this conference, in this Church in the last few years, a new maturity in the way we deal with problems, with doctrinal questions, and the way we treat people under our care. I believe we are growing up unto 'a perfect [or mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'"

He exhorted ministers to be living examples of James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. . . ."

Mr. Armstrong closed the meet-

ing with an expression of his appreciation to the ministry and concluded with: "I love you all very deeply. Thanks for being here, and God bless you."

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## THE MINISTRY, THE CHURCH AND YOU

*A candid interview with Ronald Dart, vice president for pastoral administration, about the ministry and church services of the Worldwide Church of God.*

**Question:** How would you describe the role and work of the ministry?

**Mr. Dart:** Actually the word "minister" might not always be the best word to use. I think the word "pastor" is more appropriate. The term "pastor," as used by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11, comes from a Greek word which means a "shepherd." A shepherd is always with his flocks; he stays out in the field with them, protects them,



looks after them and sees to it that they're fed properly. The images that are drawn in the Bible of a

shepherd are those of gentleness, kindness, love and concern.

So I would say that the role of the minister is to "feed the flock" (to use the biblical expression adopted by Peter in I Peter 5:2), which basically means to preach, to visit, to answer questions, to help them understand the Bible better, to proclaim the holy days of God (which outline God's plan and keep the people fully in mind of it) in their seasons. It is to keep the Work of God before their eyes at all times and help them to realize the purpose of their calling. It is to help them to make progress toward the Kingdom of God, to keep them mindful of the fact that not only are they called to do a Work, but they are called to become sons of God. Week by week, day by day, sermon by sermon, visit by visit the pastor tries to help people along toward that goal.

This is not to say that he is to live their lives for them. He is not to make their decisions for them. He is there to provide guidance and counsel, to be a friend, a confidant, a comforter in time of trouble.

**Q:** Every month, hundreds of people write us with questions about the Bible and personal problems. We let them know that ministers of the Worldwide Church of God are available to help. Some have thought that we were exclusivist, while others have feared they would be pressured to join. Would you comment about these misconceptions of the ministry and the Church?

**Mr. Dart:** We walk a very delicate tightrope between not "pushing our religion" on people, while at the same time being available to help them with their questions and problems. Our counsel, of course, inevitably reflects to one degree or another the teachings of the Church. What had been interpreted in the past by some as a "stand-offish" or exclusivist approach to religion, was really not. It was rather a pulling back from the appearance of proselyting.

We were saying, "All we're doing is preaching the gospel; we're not trying to get you into our church." And it was therefore interpreted by



a few that we wouldn't want anybody to come into our church. That, of course, is not true. It finally came home to us that some people were getting the impression that we didn't want them to come. We immediately set about to change that impression. Right now I think the pastors are doing a good job of letting people know that we're here to help, but without any pressure to join — and at the same time, conveying the message that "If you are interested, you are more than welcome."

**Q:** Which brings us to church services of the Worldwide Church of God. Are our readers welcome to attend?

**Mr. Dart:** They most certainly are!

In the past we were a bit hesitant to strongly encourage a new person to attend. One reason was, as I said before, we didn't want to seem as though we were trying to win converts away from other churches. But another factor was that the ministers were working hard to build fledgling congregations with what the Bible speaks of as "strong meat" in their sermons. They feared that a brand new person might not understand the background of a

given sermon, and without a proper foundation *could* be offended.

But now I think we've come to realize that isn't necessarily true. Probably few, if any, would be offended. We also realized that those who might be offended by a sermon might well be offended by almost anything. We just have no way of knowing.

We take care not to offend, but we must preach the Word of God, which is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Therefore, the individual himself has a responsibility to be objective and not to be offended. We feel that it is best to let each person decide for himself whether he comes to church. The responsibility is his. We have found that many people, our *Good News* readers for example, who are interested in the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God, are, generally speaking, ready for any sermon. They have already been exposed to "strong meat" and our basic doctrines in the magazine and there is no need for concern that people might be offended by a sermon. [To contact a minister of the Worldwide Church of God, please see page 29.]

**Q:** Of course, there are other opportunities for our readers to hear what pastors have to say.

**Mr. Dart:** Yes, we are continuing the public Bible lecture series [see next feature]. Any time we have one in a Church area, we send a letter to the entire mailing list, both *Plain Truth* and *Good News*, inviting them to come. The local pastor may conduct the Bible lectures. Or a visiting speaker may come in to give special sermons, not just Bible lectures, where the goal is not necessarily aimed at the public per se, but also to revitalize the churches. But the public certainly is welcome. It's an ideal opportunity for them to come and hear a very fine speaker

and to learn a little bit more about the Church. They would be more than welcome.

## PUBLIC BIBLE LECTURES

In addition to regular church services, the Worldwide Church of God sponsors public Bible lectures in scores of communities across the United States and the world.

Many hundreds write us each year asking about our views of today's prophesied crises as well as answers to biblical questions. These lectures are designed to answer those questions. The lectures are small in size to allow more direct participation by those who are interested. Question-and-answer sessions follow each lecture to enable those with specific questions the opportunity to receive greater help.

Each lecture is conducted by an ordained minister of the Worldwide Church of God. Attendance at the lectures does not bring an individual under obligation in any way. We simply want to share with you our knowledge of what the Bible says about today's world conditions and how it affects your personal future.

And as one minister put it: "The lectures show people we are interested in them and that we are available locally. Several [who attended a lecture he gave] were surprised that a minister of the Church lived in Connecticut. I think they expected us all to be based in California!" Not so, of course. As the map on the following pages shows, we have churches throughout the United States — indeed we are a *worldwide* church.

If at any time you wish more personal counsel or information concerning the Worldwide Church of God, see the "If You'd Like to Know More" box on page 29 for addresses and phone numbers.

# THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, the apostle Paul describes the living Church, the body of Christ, in these words: "For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body. . . . A body is not one single organ, but many" (*The New English Bible*).

So it is with the Worldwide Church of God. It is a multifaceted organization united in effort by a common goal: the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Of great importance — the "spear point" of the Work — are the activities of Herbert W. and Garner Ted Armstrong: the visits with world leaders, the evangelistic campaigns, the radio and TV programs, ministering to the Churches of God worldwide, the articles and letters. In past issues of *The Good News*, we have also featured stories on the frontline support functions — the headquarters administration team, the mail and data processing departments, the editorial staff which produces the magazines and booklets, the TV and radio production crew.

In this issue we feature a supporting cast that may not be conspicuously in the limelight, but nonetheless is the bulwark of the Work's strength and progress — local congregations and members of the Worldwide Church of God. In the United States we have over 300 local congregations meeting every Sabbath. They are served by 572 elders, pastors and evangelists. Weekly attendance averages over 74,000.

In addition to supporting the main thrust of the Work, our ministers and members are quietly making positive contributions, large and small, to their neighborhoods and towns. (So quietly, in fact, that we had a hard time tracking down sto-



ries for this issue!) What follows is a sampling of ways members are involved in their communities, putting in practice their Christian credo.

**Relief Help Abroad and at Home.** At 3:02 p.m., February 2, 1976, the ground began to shake in Guatemala. In 30 seconds an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale devastated the country, leaving 23,000 dead, at least 77,000 injured and an estimated one million people homeless.

Relief operations sprang up

around the world to aid the victims. Participating in the effort were congregations of the Worldwide Church of God.

An example of the response by local congregations was the material and money donated by the local congregations in North and West Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Eau Claire, in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

An announcement was made to the churches on February 21 asking for donations of much needed clothing, food and building materi-



Map by John Anderson

## CHURCHES IN THE U.S.

als. A list of needed items was distributed to Church members. According to Robert Hoops, pastor in Minneapolis, members responded by deluging the accumulations areas with some two tons of goods — flour, dry food, steel barrels, lumber, tools. In addition, many cash contributions were made. All donations were turned over to the central relief operation being conducted in the Twin Cities area.

A similar relief effort was con-

ducted close to home a month later when a tornado struck Cabot, Arkansas (about a half-hour drive north of Little Rock). An appeal was made in the Little Rock church for help to relieve the victims, and the response, according to Mr. Ray Wooten, local pastor, was very gratifying:

"The people really responded. People volunteered trucks and the time to drive them, as well as money and merchandise. As a result, in just a week we were able to

fill two pickup trucks — and I mean filled to nearly overflowing — with goods. If you had to buy it new or put a price tag on it, the total would have run into the thousands of dollars."

In addition, cash donations were raised and given to the central relief organization in Cabot, to disburse as they saw fit.

**Fourth and Fifth Stepping with Alcoholics.** Every Wednesday, Wayne Luginbill, senior pastor stationed in Fargo, North Dakota, drives over to the Veterans Hospital to counsel people suffering from the world's most widespread drug problem — alcoholism. "It's one of the toughest problems to work with," he confesses. "I had no idea of the emotional depression and personal problems involved in alcoholism until I got into it."

Mr. Luginbill became interested in alcoholism after attending a conference on alcoholism and chemical dependence. He went over to the Veterans Hospital in Fargo and found a desperate need for volunteer help with the alcoholism program, so he offered his services.

The hospital basically uses the program developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. There are 20 beds assigned for alcoholic treatment "and they're usually full," said Mr. Luginbill. Initially, he helped in group counseling. After attending a week-long seminar at Moorehead State University on dealing with the problem, he began to counsel one on one.

Mr. Luginbill described his participation as "fourth and fifth" stepping with alcoholics. The core of the Alcoholics Anonymous program for personal recovery is the "Twelve Steps." They are based on the trial-and-error experience of early members of A.A. The steps describe the attitude and activities that these early members believed were important in helping them to achieve sobriety. Acceptance of the "Twelve Steps" is not mandatory, but those who earnestly strive to apply them seem to make better

progress than those who do not.

According to literature put out by A.A., the fourth step is "making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." The fifth is "admitting to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." Mr. Luginbill described this phase of the recovery as "a little like confessional. They open up and tell all the problems in their lives, all the bad. They unload on you — you're their personal confidant." It's a difficult step to take — but it can be very therapeutic.

Mr. Luginbill admitted that he is getting as much or more out of the program as he is able to put into it. "I can see that in counseling with these people, I get very good insight into dealing with other personal problems people have that are not related to alcoholism."

**Minister Heads Local Environmental Protection Board.** What does a city of 80,000 do when it is running out of space to dump the 1600 cubic yards of garbage it generates every day?

That is the problem facing the citizens of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Helping them to find a solution is Charles F. Scott, pastor of the Worldwide Church of God.

"I have had a personal interest in anything thrifty and resourceful," said Mr. Scott in a recent interview, "probably because of my Scottish nature. One day last summer [1975] I was talking with a city commissioner about my interest in recycling. He informed me that the city had just formed an Environmental Protection Board and asked if I wanted to sit on the board because of my interest."

The board had been constituted several months before Mr. Scott's fortuitous conversation with the commissioner. But work was proceeding slowly. That was soon to change when Mr. Scott said "yes!" to the invitation and began to participate in the project.

His enthusiasm and willingness to serve was a catalyst in reestablishing momentum. When they finally got down to selecting a chairman, "My name was in the hat," he said. "I let it be known that I was available if the other members

wanted it." They did — he was elected by a unanimous vote.

And so in December the board got down to work in earnest. The study required each member to volunteer at least two hours of free time per week.

On March 1, the board completed its work. And on May 10 Mr. Scott presented the 15-page report in a hearing before the mayor, city commissioners and a standing-room-only audience of 125. In its report the board gave its support to the concept of community-managed recycling. It recommended a solid waste recycling plan similar to that being carried out in Portland, Oregon. The board's recommendations were reported by the local media.

How did the community react to the proposal? While Mr. Scott was away attending the ministerial conference in Pasadena (May 18-20), KSFY-TV conducted a phone survey. Of 118 people contacted, 61 percent were favorable to the idea, 20 percent were opposed, and 19 percent were undecided. Mr. Scott's analysis of the poll upon his return to Sioux Falls was "expecting the best — and getting it. People have to believe in recycling to support it. I was very pleased with the results of the survey. It shows people are coming to see the problems involved in a 'waste ethic.'"

Mr. Scott pointed out that the city commissioners have only decided to explore the idea. "That's the next logical step. We wouldn't want them to make a decision to recycle without thinking it out. They will probably do other studies to be sure it's sound before making a final decision."

What do studies of garbage collecting have to do with preaching the gospel — the task one normally associates with a minister? "The prophets wrote about the millennial cities and what they are going to be like," Mr. Scott pointed out. "Garbage collection isn't glamorous, but it is one aspect of environmental city planning which will be an important concept in the millennium. Eventually, in other areas besides recycling, the board will be making proposals on environmental plan-

ning, and we hope to be able to make a contribution that is worthwhile."

**Church "Sinks Roots" — 10,000 of Them.** In a "how-to-raise-funds-and-encourage-conservation" project, 75 members of the Worldwide Church of God planted 10,000 trees on April 25.

The state of Wisconsin has a reforestation program whereby private owners are provided with trees and groups are given a financial incentive to plant them. Local member Maurice Benson suggested participation in the program and coordinated efforts with the state Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR provided trees for three different land owners, and on April 25 church members planted them. "We got 4.5 cents per tree in payment," reported local pastor George Kackos. "That was more than groups normally get. Mr. Hovde, the state forester who worked with us, felt we had done one of the best jobs."

The church sent in an offering to headquarters to increase media coverage, said Mr. Kackos. The remainder went into the local church treasury with the idea in mind of funding local community efforts. For instance, recently the church made a contribution to a local "meals on wheels" program where people who are on special diets or can't get out on their own have meals brought to their home Monday through Friday. □

#### **Announcement for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Readers**

We are in the process of compiling a list of subscribers to services for our deaf and hearing-impaired readers. Available will be transcripts of our radio and TV programs by alphabetical subject listing.

If you have a need for this service, please send your name and address (or the mailing label from this magazine or *The Plain Truth*) to: Educational Services for the Handicapped, Box 111, Pasadena, CA 91123. If you use one of our preaddressed envelopes, please mark it: "Attention: Handicapped Department" in the lower left-hand corner. In order to serve you effectively, your immediate response would be appreciated.