

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

OFFICE OF
RODERICK C. MEREDITH, *Second Vice-President*

November 25, 1969

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings again from Headquarters! Mr. Herbert Armstrong is in New York right now. He stopped off there Sunday on his way from Bricket Wood and will probably return to Pasadena tomorrow.

Mr. Armstrong's semi-annual letter to all PLAIN TRUTH subscribers is now being mailed out. It is comprised of the first four pages of the Co-Worker letter -- which all of you have probably received by now. Because several booklets on a variety of subjects were announced, the response to this letter should be especially good. Most of our subscribers will be interested in at least one of the various booklets announced -- which is not to say that we expect most to respond -- but if only 20% respond, that means we will receive over 300,000 responses!

The semi-annual response for the past three years has averaged about 18% for each letter -- varying from about 24% in the summer of 1967 to about 15% in the summer of 1968. The letter sent out this past summer produced a response of about 17% -- which was a record of 208,205 letters received here at Pasadena alone. The all-time high percentage of response for a semi-annual letter was recorded in the summer of 1964 when Mr. Armstrong announced for the first time his book, God Speaks Out On "The New Morality." We received an amazing 43% response!

We must do our part in offering literature that is helpful and interesting, and Mr. Armstrong must -- with God's help -- labor to say the right thing in just the right way to arouse the interest of our subscribers and to inspire them to respond. But the success of the letter depends a great deal on our heartfelt, earnest PRAYERS! Pray -- and encourage the brethren to pray -- that the response to this semi-annual will be good. And pray, especially for a good response to the Co-Worker Letter! The overall percentage of increase for the year stands at just 21.4%. We need an especially good month of December to bring this figure up as much as

possible. Since we had a 36% increase in December of last year, a really outstanding response will be required to have a 36 to 40% increase in this December.

Pray that God will cause thousands of those responding to the semi-annual letter who are not Co-Workers to send in a contribution along with their request and that many additional thousands will be prompted to subscribe to TOMORROW'S WORLD as a result of the announcement about "The Story of Man" being changed to this magazine.

All of you have probably read the article in the latest Portfolio about the changes in the editorial structure in The PLAIN TRUTH. Since Dr. Hoeh's responsibilities as Dean of Faculties have continually grown and have required more and more of his time -- especially now that we are involved in seeking accreditation -- it has become humanly impossible for him to properly carry out that responsibility as well as teach classes, do historical research and oversee the details of producing The PLAIN TRUTH each month as the Managing Editor. Mr. Art Ferdig will now have that responsibility, which means that Dr. Hoeh will join me as a Senior Editor. As the article in the Portfolio explained, a number of our experienced writers will now have increased responsibilities as Associate Editors. The staff box in the November issue of The PLAIN TRUTH shows these changes.

We all realize that this Work is going to receive a lot of publicity -- much of it unfavorable -- before this Work is over, but so far we have been almost unnoticed by the major news media -- at least until the past few weeks. Since the publicizing of the Rohan case, we have been mentioned in many articles in various newspapers around the world, including articles specifically about the Work in The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times, two of the top-ranked newspapers in the United States.

In just the past couple of weeks, no less than five different representatives from the news media have been on campus for the purpose of gathering information. Included in this number were a reporter from The Los Angeles Times and a representative from NBC News who wanted to make arrangements for a brief television news sequence about the College. If produced, this sequence would probably be shown in this region of the country -- if not nationally.

Just a couple of weeks ago, one of our ministers, Mr. Robert Lay, was interviewed by a reporter from a local newspaper in Kingsport, Tennessee. The reporter, a woman, had seen the New York Times article and was particularly interested in the Church as a result of the death

Pross

Healing

(caused by appendicitis complicated by peritonitis) of one of our members. This was a potentially serious situation, but Mr. Lay answered her questions tactfully and with wisdom so that the Church was not put in a bad light. Apparently no article has yet been published as a result of the interview.

As the end draws nearer, many of you in the Field may be put on the spot by reporters or others seeking to "get us" by "exposing" our beliefs on voting, military service, healing and doctors, divorce and remarriage, makeup, etc. You cannot plan in advance what to say, of course, but remember the principle that we don't dictate what our members must do in every area of their personal lives. We only teach what the Bible says. What they do is up to them. This can be stressed in answering many touchy questions.

And remember that MANY of our members or members' children are, in fact, in the military service; some probably DO vote and we all "believe in" doctors -- that is, we know that doctors CAN HELP with the setting of bones, with sewing up wounds and repair surgery, with childbirth, etc. In each of these areas, the members have to decide how far they will go -- for we do NOT "legislate" the exact degree of their faith in these matters!

In another encounter that occurred this past August, a reporter -- also a woman -- showed up for Sabbath services at Toronto. The deacon at the door told her it was a private meeting and sent her to see Mr. Gary Antion. Mr. Antion, thinking quickly, dispelled the unfavorable first impression by being extra friendly and explaining that the reason she wasn't admitted was because we rent the facilities and don't want unsolicited people walking in off the street disturbing the meeting. She stayed for the services and wrote a very favorable article for a Toronto newspaper the following Monday.

It would have been better, of course, if the deacon at the door had made her welcome and then gotten word to the minister. I am mentioning this because the same thing may happen in your area. We don't want to allow enemies into our services, of course, but if a reporter shows up, or someone who is merely curious, it is far better for the ushers to make them welcome and then send word to the local minister than to offend them and make them feel that we have some kind of "secret society." Most curiosity-seekers will not come very many Sabbaths unless they are interested, but if they do, you can then explain that our meetings are private.

On the other hand, I need to remind all of you not to "let down" in regard to our policy on INVITING prospectives to Church. God's Church

is for God's people. In the past, we have said to invite people to Church either after baptism or if they were virtually ready to be baptized but you felt a month or two of Church attendance would help them understand what they were getting into and also help you to evaluate their "bringing forth fruits" more effectively.

Mr. Armstrong definitely DOES NOT want us "loading up" the Church with a lot of unconverted people! Yet some of you are STILL inviting people to Church without mentioning anything about their desire for or interest in baptism!

Therefore, here is the new policy which I feel will be more consistent and more Biblical. From now on, do not invite anyone to Church unless: 1) They have been baptized. Or, 2) You are already in the process of counselling them about baptism. Let me explain this second point further. This second category should include only those who have been led by God -- perhaps through our literature and/or through your follow-up visits -- to desire baptism and you, in turn, have already counselled them at least once about baptism and let them know that Church attendance for a month or two on a provisional basis will be PART OF that counselling and "proving" process. That is, it will give them a better opportunity to know and understand fully what they are getting into and to "count the cost" as Jesus said. Also, it will give you, as God's minister, a better opportunity to see IF they "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" by their faithful attendance, zeal and positive response to the sermons and spiritual fellowship during the few weeks they are attending Church as part of the educational and counselling process immediately preceding baptism.

Therefore, when you note on a visit slip that you have invited these people to Church, you will simply be able to note on the visit slip that they are baptized or actually are being counselled for baptism. This is far different from many visit slips which indicate NOTHING about baptism, yet show that the person was invited to Church.

Here are some examples, from this week's report, of prospectives being invited too soon:

"Had many questions. She was somewhat argumentative, though. She attended once last year. Has been visited once since then. She has not proved things as she should. Just recently (three months ago) started observing Sabbath. Does not really understand 1,000 years, Holy Days, tithing, teaching on makeup although she has the booklets on these things. But she said she was sure this was the one True Church. Told her we would arrange for someone to drive her to Church."

This woman is obviously not ready for baptism or even close to baptism, yet she was invited to Church!

"Wanted to know if God the Father spoke in Matthew 3:17. Wants to attend the True Church. Advice: This was not the Father. It was an angel. Write for 'A True History of the True Church!' You can attend Church. Be sure and count cost."

If this person was ready for baptism, nothing on the visit slip indicated it!

"A blind man who has been on drugs for epilepsy. Even though he has this problem, his mind seems good. He wants to be anointed for the epilepsy. Also wants to be baptized. Invited him to Church."

Again, no indication at all that he was ready for baptism -- only that he wanted baptism!

First Visit -- "He has been listening for two years. Has been very diligent for 6-8 months. Keeps Sabbath. Tithes. Prays and studies every day. Will write for CC and get started. Wants baptism. Advice: Need further instruction. Invited to Church."

This man "needs further instruction" and had not even written for the CC. Although he sounds like he is further along than the others I've cited, he should not have been invited on the first visit!

These are just a few examples to make very plain what we mean by "inviting people too soon." So from now on, be sure those you invite to Church either have been baptized or are at least in the process of baptismal counselling -- have requested baptism of their own volition. And WRITE THIS DOWN on the visit slips!

Modified Visiting Procedures

Now, I want to give you some VERY IMPORTANT modifications of the visiting procedures which we will institute forthwith. Because of extreme budgetary limitations and lack of manpower we are faced with in the coming months, we are going to recommend a new approach to visiting. In the past, we may have put too much emphasis on mere "numbers" of visits per week. Some of this is good to set a general standard. But it

has also resulted in hardships on a few of our men and, more important, has resulted in constant "general" visits to members whether they request it, or need it, or not. Often, because we expected about eighteen to twenty-one visits per week, many of our ministers would "drop by" the homes of friendly members who live nearby or who live along the main routes out to visit others in order to "keep up the numbers." Sometimes this has been helpful and encouraging. But it is often a waste of manpower and we can no longer afford it.

So from now on, answering a need, serving the people who want it, and quality in the visiting will be the major criteria. We will, however, set a general standard of "about" fifteen to seventeen visits per week for all full-time ministers. Exceptions will be District Superintendents (who already are anyway) and those in difficult situations such as Mr. Lowell Blackwell and a few others who have already been exceptions.

Here, then is the new format for all U. S. ministers to follow in visiting:

A. Types of visits for full-time ministers and Elders:

1. Much of your time should be spent on prospective member visits and follow-up visits to bring these people along toward baptism and Church attendance. As in the past, we recommend that the pastor of the Church make nearly all of the first contacts if possible and also conduct the baptismal counsellings. However, full-time Local Elders certainly may and should be used in some of the intermediate follow-up visits if the pastor does not have time.
2. Member and prospective member problem visits: Again, the pastor of the Church should make these when a serious situation is involved, but often the Local Elders will need to be the ones to follow through on general, financial, family and child rearing types of problems with the members. If the problems are really serious and the people are belligerent, often they should be suspended or simply put out of God's Church until they wake up. Others, depending upon the nature of the problem, should simply be left alone to work out their problems themselves. Sometimes, we have found that fifteen to twenty repeat visits are made on certain "weak" families just because they are generally weak, uneducated or slightly hardheaded. When you think about it, fellows, that takes a LOT of money when you consider the ministerial salaries involved, the gas, oil and lease-car expenses to beat the road

back and forth all this number of times, etc. So if people are not really willing to be helped, it is often better to let them drop out of Church attendance for a while till God Himself -- through His Spirit -- spans them or wakes them up without our continually prodding and harassing them about their problem! For some of these people may not only "have" a problem but BE a potential problem -- a troublemaker in the Church and a potential source of DANGER as newspaper reporters and the public limelight begin to hover ever closer to God's Church and zero in on any "odd" happenings or listen to any hardheaded or recalcitrant "members" who will be willing to open their big mouths!

I know that we want to help these people, but we must also view these people and their lethargy and rebellion in the light of potential harm to the WHOLE Work of God if they are kept in the Church when often they should not be and don't deserve to be!

3. As time permits, even full-time ministers and Elders should occasionally visit the elderly, the sick, the widows and others of this type for encouragement. Certainly God tells us not to forsake the widows and it is often inspiring to the whole Church if they realize the minister is "not too busy" to visit those who are sick or elderly when time permits.
4. Cut out general member visiting except in rare circumstances, unless they specifically request it. Scattered members in tour areas would be exceptions, of course.
5. Take time to work with the leading men -- those who you are considering for the V. P. T. C. or potential deacons or Elders. Some of this can, of course, be simply social and enjoyable and should be. You need to really get to know these men in many different types of circumstances and also be able to encourage them to develop in an all-around way to be leaders in the Church. But don't overdo socially or gobble up too much of their time or yours.
6. Spend more time with college applicants and seventeen-to twenty-year-olds on an individual basis. As we stated, it is very important for us to get a thorough and correct analysis

of students before we invest thousands of dollars and hours in them by accepting them for three or four years of Ambassador College. Also, get to know any prospective employees who may be coming in to Pasadena or Big Sandy to work for the Press, the Television Studio, etc. Again, it is very important that we get a proper evaluation on such people before they give up their jobs, sell their homes and undertake an entirely new life out here at our request!

7. On the Sabbath, the pastor of the Church should get around to greet and chat with as many people as possible. He should leave all but emergency counsellings for week days and the Sabbath anointings for the Local Elders. Otherwise, you who are pastors will find that you are "off in a corner" with only two or three people, and most of the people in the congregation will never see you personally and up close on the Sabbath. So now you don't need to catch up on "numbers" of visits by long counsellings after your sermons. Rather, get out and mix with the people -- get the "feel" of the congregation -- so the Church as a whole knows and feels close to you and vice versa. In this way, also, you will obviously have a great many two, three, or even ten-minute "counselings" standing around in the hall after services visiting with the members who may not need a special visit but who would like to see you and ask you a quick question or just say hello occasionally.

- B. Local Elders not in our employ should be used for anointings and encouraging-type visits to the elderly, sick or widows. Discourage general member visiting as a waste of time unless it is requested. Without a purpose or need the "general" visits are often unwanted intrusions on members' time and activities. Some members, of course, even resent these as though it were a "gestapo-like, checking-up-on-you" situation.

That's it!

However, as an overall principle let me state that the ministers, Elders and even local Local Elders may, on occasion, sense that they have not seen someone at Church for a while or hear that they have a problem and feel they should visit them. In this case, why not just call them up on the phone and say: "Hi folks! I have not gotten to see you or visit with you for a while and hope everything is going well with you. How are things? Is there anything I can do to help you? Would you particularly like for me or

one of the Elders to drop by and visit tonight or in a few days when we are over your way?"

This type of sincere and openhearted interest -- without asking too many questions or appearing to "check up" on the people -- should be encouraging and may result in them occasionally requesting a visit which really would be helpful. Even without this, the general warmth and interest shown in such a brief conversation -- without prying or checking up -- will be appreciated and help the members feel closer to you so that they will be more free to request a visit and help when and if there is a real need.

Also, I would like you to know that I have talked this over with two or three of our District Superintendents and one of our other Field ministers who just happened to be passing through Pasadena today and they all agreed--wholeheartedly and obviously without pressure -- that this approach and the reduction of the general number of visits expected from eighteen to twenty-one down to fifteen to seventeen would almost completely eliminate any pressure regarding "numbers" of visits and be reasonably easy for any conscientious minister to carry out. And even here, this "general standard" of about fifteen to seventeen visits per week does not have to be an absolute thing at all if there are emergencies in the Church or bad weather, personal sickness, etc.

So now, it should be easier than EVER for all of God's ministers to accomplish their expected work load and still have very adequate time for family life, and for personal prayer, Bible study and meditation. Many of you would like to take off an entire day every month or two for fasting. This, too, will now be made much easier by this new procedure. So I hope that you will follow it zealously and enthusiastically. At the same time feel free to write in any further suggestions that you feel as God's servants would be valid and helpful.

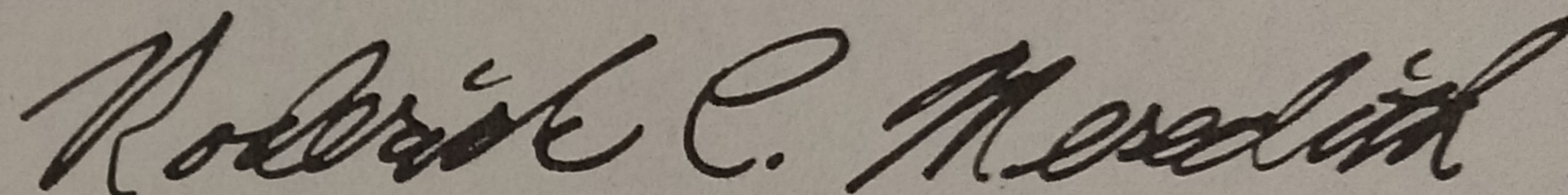
But we DO need to spend much of the extra time getting closer to our God! Just during the past few months, two of our ministers' wives have died, at least two or three of our Church ladies have been raped, and I am receiving increasing reports of Church members dying of cancer! We do NOT have the power of God to the extent we should at all. Obviously, many of us are not as close to God as we should be and are allowing material interests, the mechanical "administrative" procedures in God's Work and the general cares of the world and wasting of time to keep us from the fervent and close communion with our Creator which we should and must have if we are to glorify His name! I ask all of you with spiritual discernment to heed this. Let us pray for one another more fervently -- and that

God will pour out the gifts of His Spirit to a greater degree as we yield to Him and walk with Him.

The kind of power and conviction that could be manifested in our sermons, the kind of rapid and occasional dramatic healings and reactions to our prayers, the kind of deep and heartfelt CHANGES in the lives of many of us and the leading men in the Church who work with us -- the IMPACT of these things on the whole membership and Work -- will more than make up for any lack of "numbers" in visiting the general members or weaker brethren when they are manifested.

Can we now use more of our "extra" time this way?

Sincerely, your brother in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roderick C. Meredith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Roderick C. Meredith