

FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings, this time from smoggy Pasadena! I hope all of you out there in the field are in good health and keeping up the good work. All of us here are fine, except for the smog and human problems which will always be with us.

I just returned last evening from an excellent campaign in Phoenix! Even though we had no advertising whatsoever--not even one scratch in the newspaper or one word on radio or TV--we, nevertheless, had larger crowds than any so far in the series of "mini-campaigns." There were 105 enthusiastic new people attending the first night and 90 the second. Total attendance was 540 Friday night and 525 Saturday night. Both the new people and the brethren were very enthusiastic in their response--and I am sure that the Phoenix church will be a wonderful place in which to place a number of new people whom God may be calling. Mark Cardona, our local minister, was the M.C. and did a very fine job as did Ross Jutsum and John Beaver on the excellent music and John Prohs on the audio and overall whole organization and back-up. They are a fine group to work with, and we all felt the program went very well and are thankful to God for it.

One of the prime benefits of these small campaigns is the encouragement and enthusiasm it engenders in the local brethren! I hope all of you in the larger areas are thinking about having a campaign in your church areas and get your church people solidly and enthusiastically behind it once it is announced.

On the way over, my wife and I stopped by Tucson and had a fine visit with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Armstrong. It was Shyrel's first opportunity to really get acquainted with Mr. Armstrong and his wife and she enjoyed it very much--plus the fine luncheon we shared together.

Mr. Armstrong is in excellent health and we were able to have intensive discussions about a number of things in the Work for a period of over four solid hours. He is taking a great personal interest in the Y.O.U. and Y.E.S. programs and is going to direct them personally more than ever before. This should certainly be an inspiration to our brethren and young people and help a great deal in building toward the future of God's Church.

As you should have read in last week's "News Summary," the thorough audit by one of the most respected C.P.A. firms in the country, Arthur Andersen and Company, is virtually completed, and we are grateful that in this area and in the various court activities which are proceeding, absolutely NOTHING illegal has been uncovered regarding Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Rader or God's Work. Although the confrontations and legal "explosions" --which we did NOT start, remember--are winding down, our team remains vigilant and dedicated to preserving the integrity of Mr. Armstrong and this Work. All of us ministers should be more grateful than we have been for the fine work done by Mr. Rader, Mr. Helge and the excellent legal defense team they have put together. Many of you out there perhaps do not realize the tremendous job they have done under adverse circumstances, and the massive amount of work and long hours they have had to put in--often working FAR INTO THE NIGHT--in order that we can have the type of "peace" in God's Work now to continue getting out the gospel from our own beautiful campus here in Pasadena.

Even though some of you may not have understood some of the methods employed, or the type of genuine Church-State crisis that was involved, I hope you can sincerely appreciate the result that--in the end--God is giving us. So let's be genuinely supportive of one another in God's Work and appreciate the efforts and sacrifices involved in the lives of each one who is supporting Mr. Armstrong in this worldwide work.

Now, fellow ministers, I would like to discuss something that is becoming an increasingly critical problem within the ministry and within God's Church as a whole--especially here in the United States. Increasing numbers of our church members are beginning to divorce their mates for, it seems, almost ANY conceivable reason! What's more, they then expect to "remain in the Church" and probably REMARRY someone else in the Church--perhaps their former friend's wife who has, by now, divorced him, and is also "still in the Church."

We are going to have long doctrinal and theological discussions with Mr. Herbert Armstrong to cover and thoroughly understand any legitimate reasons for divorce and remarriage. However, as of this writing, there are only THREE that God's Church has officially recognized as legitimate: (I) Porneia--that is gross immorality involving unadmitted fornication before marriage or a very serious or continuing type of adulterous or homosexual or similar relationship after marriage, (II) Fraud--this is the case where one is "tricked" in some way and we have always understood and recognized this as an action that would in fact "annul" a marriage since God would never bind a union based on fraud in the first place, (III) Desertion--by the unconverted mate--although this was accepted and taught by the Church long before his action, a classic example of this would be Mr. Raymond McNair's situation. His wife refused to be a wife to him for over two years--to sleep with him, cook for him, or even civilly communicate with him in a decent manner. Rather, she had left God's Church and was actively FIGHTING God's Church and Mr. McNair, turning his children against him and literally cursing him to his face. Finally, upon advice of Mr. Armstrong and Ted Armstrong, he was finally forced to make legal the already existing FACT that she had deserted him and was no longer his wife in any way whatsoever.

I repeat, these three exceptions are the ONLY ones recognized by God's Church as biblical reasons for people who are already converted to divorce a mate. Perhaps even we in the ministry need to realize more vividly the meaning of Jesus' statement: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

We must genuinely FEAR to "water down" this ringing declaration of the Son of God in any of our own cases, or in situations involving the brethren over which God has given us responsibility. Because, fellow ministers, God will hold us all RESPONSIBLE if we in any way undercut, "water down" or lessen the BINDING quality of Christian marriage which Jesus Christ emphasized so fervently!

In Malachi 2:15-16 (RSV), our Creator states: "Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let NONE be faithless to the wife of his youth. 'For I HATE DIVORCE, says the Lord the God of Israel, uncovering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.'"

Fellows, our God--who does NOT change in these spiritual principles --says he HATES divorce!

Do we??

I do not feel it necessary, at this time, to print an entire written article on the subject of binding marriages to you ministers who should know this subject pretty well anyway. But, in love and as your servant, I feel I must bring this absolutely vital matter to your combined attention. Ever since the attitude and approach of "watering down" and "loosening things up" began under G.T.A. back in 1973/74 after his return to power, it seems that "Pandora's Box" has been opened and individual people and occasionally even ministers and/or ministers wives are taking unto themselves the authority to divorce and remarry for almost ANY conceivable reason! This must now STOP!

We as a ministry are responsible to God for helping our brethren and co-workers to strengthen and BUILD their marriages in every possible way. We as a ministry must now make a MASSIVE effort to teach, preach, pray, counsel, set an example for, and in every way we can, encourage our brethren to picture the relationship of Jesus Christ and his Church in their marriages. Remember this absolutely vital analogy Paul gives us: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, LOVE your wives, EVEN AS Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:23-25).

If we are genuinely on our knees as a ministry regarding this growing problem--this spiritual CANCER--within the very body of Christ, I am sure he will give us the faith, the fervency, the love and the wisdom to help our brethren and ourselves build the kind of marriages pleasing to him.

Therefore, I do now ask all of you ministers to give this problem top priority in your ministry and do all you can to emphasize the VITAL importance of strong, stable, loving marriages in God's Church. Do this, fellows, in your preaching, in your teaching and Bible studies and other occasions, in personal visits and in counseling after church and other occasions. Assign the sermonette men in your area also to cover various phases and facets of the meaning of marriage and building strong marriages in their talks and in their visits as well. Unitedly, let us work and pray with all our hearts to stem the tide of this swelling flood of selfishness, vanity, lust, bitterness and all-around CARNALITY, which is the real cause of the increasing frustration and bitterness between so many husbands and wives.

Truly, we must come OUT of this world and be separate. And our entire approach to marriage is certainly one of the most important areas in which God's Holy Spirit--if we yield to it and exercise it--will make us truly different.

"Thanks for listening"--and thanks in advance for putting this program into effect. We will get back to you as soon as we can with more details, but building solid marriages from the foundation up is the core of the ultimate solution. Keep up the good work, and a number of us will be

seeing many of you out there within a few weeks in various area conferences.

With Christian love,



Roderick C. Meredith

P.S. Mr. Armstrong and I have asked Mr. Raymond McNair to coordinate all doctrinal questions that come to us, and bring them to God's Apostle in an organized fashion. So please note carefully Mr. McNair's accompanying letter, and send in any questions you have regarding doctrinal or policy matters re. Divorce and Remarriage that need to be clarified. Address your letter to Pastoral Administration, Attention: Raymond McNair.

MR. RAYMOND McNAIR'S LETTER

The Pastoral Administration Department (PAD) needs the cooperation of all of you ministers. Repeatedly, we get reports that there is a certain amount of confusion concerning the handling of divorce and remarriage problems.

Of course, any doctrinal or policy matters will be decided by Christ's Apostle. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has expressed to some of us on various occasions his deep concern over reported abuses in the actual administration of our teachings concerning the Bible grounds for divorce and remarriage. Mr. Armstrong has wanted some of us (Mr. Meredith, myself, etc.) to get together any facts which should be taken to him for his decision in this important area.

We would like you to send in various questions, problems, specific examples, etc. which you feel we need as input in order to be able to take them to Mr. Armstrong for further instruction and clarification.

Unfortunately, according to persistent reports, there is a certain amount of confusion and disparity of practice in administering the Church's teachings concerning divorce and remarriage.

In the meantime, please remember to do everything (in sermons, Bible studies, personal counselling, etc.) to build solid marriages, teaching the permanency of that God-ordained institution, and the awfulness of divorce, regardless of how it comes about.

So please send your questions, problems or specific examples to me so that we can go over this material, organizing it etc., for the purpose of taking it to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong for further clarification.

Thanks very much.

--Raymond F. McNair

TRANSFERS - COST OF LIVING

Since we're in the middle of summer transfer time again, I thought it might be helpful to make a few comments regarding a major aspect of