

the making of a campaign

PORTLAND

IN 1974, the Worldwide Church of God sponsored over 50 personal appearance programs around the globe. The final one of the year was conducted by Garner Ted Armstrong in Portland, Oregon, on December 13-14.

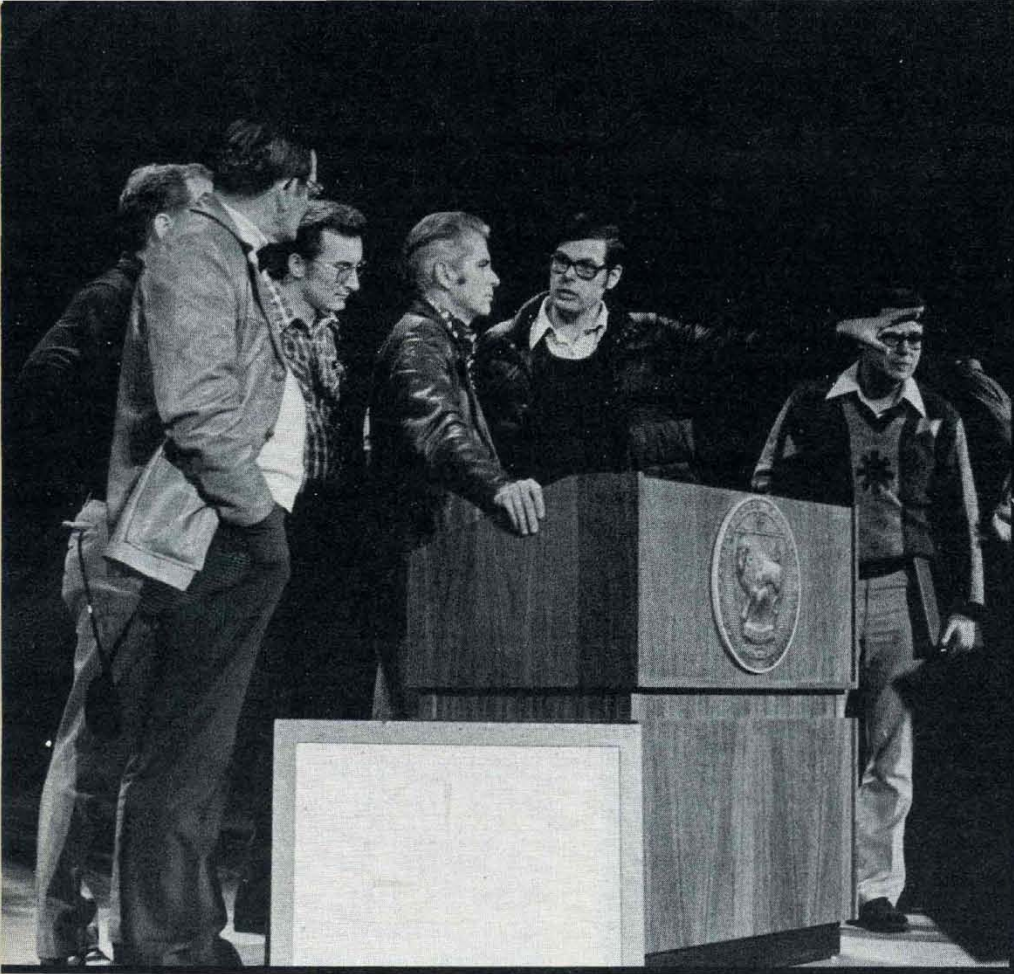
You will be able to see highlights of this campaign on nationwide TV in a series of one-hour summer specials. Here is a preview of what you will see, as well as the story of what you *won't* see — the people and preparations offstage that made what happened on stage possible.

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Each campaign is the culmination, the payoff, of many man-hours of advance preparation. Planning must start months — even years — ahead. In the case of Portland, the wheels started to roll in October 1973, when the city was chosen for a campaign. Immediately the civic auditorium was booked. According to Sherwin McMichael, director of the Personal Appearance Department, this was none too soon. "Many auditoriums are scheduling for 1980 right now. To book a hall six

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months in advance is equivalent to sitting down at a gourmet restaurant and expecting a steak within two minutes. It's just impossible. Ideally, we need to schedule 3 to 5 years in advance. We've already scheduled Mr. Armstrong through most of '75 and are working on '76."

Several months after the auditorium was booked, the local congregations of the Worldwide Church of God in Portland got involved with a series of fund-raising projects to help offset campaign expenses. They held bake sales, pancake breakfasts, a spaghetti feed, a wood-cutting party, garage sales. In addition, several members gave private donations. Altogether over \$3,000 was raised for the cause.

They also held meetings to organize ushering and other support functions indispensable to the campaign's success.

Since the campaign was to be taped for television, a video tape crew was dispatched to Portland several days ahead. From early Wednesday morning (December 11) to late Thursday afternoon they positioned lights, strung out hundreds of feet of cable, and set up and checked out the four camera units to be used.

They finished their task with plenty of time to spare — right? Wrong! The auditorium had to be cleared for a concert on Friday morning. After finishing the tedious, meticulous task, they marked where everything stood and then took everything down and packed it away!

The next day was Friday, the 13th. But the camera crew is not a superstitious lot. By 3:20 p.m. when Mr. Armstrong dropped in to check out the lighting, all the equipment had been repositioned. This was the kind of smooth running that characterized the whole campaign effort. "It was certainly one of the smoothest we've had," remarked Mr. McMichael afterwards.

Meanwhile 28 musicians and singers were busy rehearsing under the leadership of Gary Prather, the



Mr. Armstrong (top photo) discusses the setup with Dick Quincer (pointing) and other crew members a few hours before opening night. Left: Sherwin McMichael, director of the Personal Appearance Department, emceed the program. Above: Mrs. Bobby Fisher, who attended an early campaign of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's in December 1934, came 40 years later to hear his son.

choral director in Pasadena. Most of the choral members are full-time students at the two Ambassador Colleges in Pasadena, California, and Big Sandy, Texas. They willingly endure the disruption of their studies and sacrifice of time and sleep to accompany Mr. Armstrong on his campaigns. The only time they get to rehearse together is when they are reunited a couple of days before each campaign.

After performing Friday and Saturday nights, Mr. Prather and the Pasadena students flew back for Sunday night's winter chorale concert in Pasadena. Then the students from both campuses plunged back into the pressures and deadlines of the final days of the fall semester.

On Friday evening, everything came together. The stage was set, the cameras ready. At 6:40 the doors swung open to admit several hundred people waiting outside. Most of the musicians and singers were backstage by seven. Mr. Armstrong arrived at 7:18 and ten minutes later he gathered with the cast and crew in a room offstage. After a brief prayer, everyone departed for his station. By now a capacity crowd of 3600 was waiting. The lights dimmed, the music started, the curtain opened, and another program began.

Sort Out Your Life

In his message the first night, Mr. Armstrong drove home the fact that we are living at a prophetically important juncture in history. Here are a few excerpts:

"People ask me, 'What do you think? Is there going to be a world war?' And I say, 'I don't know, I know there's going to be one eventually.' Jesus Christ said you are living in the end of an age and that is what I want to talk about tonight.

"Now we like to have our excuses . . . [but] Jesus continually said, 'I'm going to come again. I'm coming back to the earth! . . . I can't apologize to all the people who don't believe that.

" . . . I am here to declare that the

signs are here that plainly show that World War III is on the way and the United States is going to come out the loser unless we do something — not something economically, not militarily, but spiritually This country is never going to avert such disaster unless we turn to God I'm not giving you a formula about a lot of strange things you need to believe, I'm telling you that you need to get on your knees and sort out your life You've got a personal relationship with Him whether you know it or not, and you're going to sort out that relationship . . . or you will surely die."

Sabbath Services

At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, local congregations in the Portland area and the Willamette Valley convened at the auditorium for a special service. Mr. Armstrong had mentioned the meeting in his opening remarks the night before and invited anyone who was interested to come. "We do not proselyte, nor ask people to join something," he pointed out. "We have a way of life in which we believe very deeply, very sincerely We've got our problems, got our faults, but we believe we have something of tremendous value we'd like to share with the rest of the world."

After the opening hymns, and prayer, Mr. Les McCullough, director of the International Division, spoke of the growth and needs in the foreign work of the Church. He was followed by Mr. McMichael, who summarized the progress of the personal appearance programs for the year and plans for the future.

Meanwhile, 13 rows back, Mr. Armstrong was busily preparing to speak. Instead of going over his notes for a sermon, however, he was going over questions submitted by the audience. He departed from the usual sermonette/sermon format to speak candidly about the Church and its teachings. He responded to questions concerning the close of the age, the teaching of the Church about law and grace — something

frequently misrepresented in pamphlets and booklets. He also talked about issues and problems currently under discussion in the Church.

Forty Years Later

That evening Mr. Armstrong spoke to another capacity crowd. Among those sitting in the audience was a veteran of many early campaigns, Mrs. Bobby Fisher. Forty years earlier, in December, 1934, Mrs. Fisher, then a teenager, sat in a country schoolhouse west of Eugene and heard Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong speak in one of the early evangelistic campaigns of his ministry. Convinced and convicted, she became one of the pioneer members of the Worldwide Church of God.

Things have changed a lot since those early days. From its humble beginnings the campaigns and Church have grown considerably. But one thing has remained the same — the message. Now, as then, the Kingdom of God, repentance and salvation comprise the witness of this Work.

Be Worthy To Escape

"God's Word has a system, a series of choices and of consequences, of hazards and benefits, of cause and effect. Obey — the blessings are huge. Disobey — the curses never leave your door. What do we have today? Do we have the blessings?"

" . . . Christ said, 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass' (Luke 21:36). There are two kinds of salvation God Almighty holds out to people in this last age — physical and spiritual 'Escape all these things' means physically avoiding what Jesus said is surely going to happen to almost everybody else

"Jesus of Nazareth said there would come a time when a human being wouldn't need to die. Spiritual salvation — yes, absolutely. And also physical escape and protection If you repent, you don't ever have to die. It's up to you. I pray to God that my coming here has been worth one human life." □