

950909 The Church in a State of Transition HLH

Age to age, you're still the same, by the power of the name, El Shaddai, El Shaddai, air come con at o' night, we will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai.

Through your love and through the ram, you save the Son of Abraham.

Through the power of your hand, you turn the sea into dry land.

To the outcast on her knees, you were the God who really ceased, and by your might you set your children free.

El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El El Iona at o' night, Age to age, you're still the same, by the power of the name, El Shaddai, El Shaddai, air come con at o' night, we will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai.

El Shaddai, El Shaddai Through the years you made it clear that the time of Christ was near, though the people couldn't see what Messiah ought to be.

Though your word contained the plan, they just could not understand, your most awesome work was done, through the frailty of your Son.

El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El El Iona at o' night, Age to age, you're still the same, by the power of the name, El Shaddai, El Shaddai, air come con at o' night, we will praise you till we die, El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El Shaddai.

I've been to Syria on a number of occasions, but I've never thought that Syrians were quite so sentimental.

I say that appropriately.

I regard Syria, not to speak politically, but as one of those remarkable places in the world I have visited, both as a land and the people I have met.

There are places which I would regard as marvelous in terms of the land, others as marvelous in terms of the people.

Tonga is one like that in the South Pacific, the land has little to say, but Syria both as a land and as a people.

If you know some of my experiences, I suppose in a way it confirms what it is like really to know people, the like of which we seldom see in terms of the sense of honesty.

But that cannot be the topic for today, though sometime I should tell you what it's like in other areas of the world in terms of honesty.

And that reflects itself in character in general.

Mr. Seifak suggested that I address the logical follow-up of the reading of the letter that you have just heard, and so today will be different from the usual matters.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that today we are living in a world quite different from the one that perhaps half of us here lived in as we grew up.

Therefore, our approach is necessarily rather different.

To have had, for example, a booklet, to have had a booklet as a supplement to the plain truth, called homosexuality, understanding the struggle, would in a sense not have had an impact at all.

If this were 1955, maybe even in terms of our audience, 1965, and certainly not 1945, or 35, or for some of you, 25.

Nevertheless, we live in a different world.

I first became interested in the 1940s in the question of drug abuse, but nothing at all like the social drug abuse.

This was a problem that often followed from medical science, unintentionally, but because drugs may be selectively addictive.

So we are addressing a world quite different, for example, from the letters that you heard about from Mr. Schallenberger.

I do not know of more than one possible problem such as was stated that I ever knew of in the school system that I grew up with.

But we remember that that was the time of the Great Depression, and when people are in a Great Depression, they do not do all the things they do today.

This was the time of World War II, and during World War II we did not do some of the things people allow today.

Even during the time afterward to the Korean War, when it became apparent that the Soviet Union had access to the hydrogen bomb, not merely the atomic bomb, were these things thought of or permitted in the general world that I grew up in.

On the other hand, I became aware of some of these problems in 1953 on a baptizing tour where I discovered so many things unrelated to the Bible being practiced in the Bible about.

That I never found in the liberal state of California.

Many things were simply not known or were done in private, but these things have magnified themselves since the 50s, and for more than 40 years now we have a very significant change in our world.

I would suggest, as a matter of principle, that for the sum of money the youth magazine would be worth any family subscribing to, even if you chose not to retain it, but simply to have a copy available to make available to any family with younger people who might have a need whom you may encounter in any month or two.

How many issues are we planning for the year for present six? That's why I say month or two because I was under that impression by monthly.

With respect to the Plain Truth magazine, we certainly are going to have a need of addressing questions that we might not have had a need of before.

We have heard some of the responsibility of the local churches and the Plain Truth will have to follow up on some of that.

For example, the church now is interested more than ever before in working with the local people whom God has called.

The reason for that we should explain.

There was a time radio was a means of reaching people on a grand scale.

We had what are called superpower, clear channel radio stations in the 1940s.

I heard the program The World Tomorrow first in 1944 from W.O.A.I. San Antonio, Texas while living in Northern California.

My wife's family heard it in Northern Texas with the broadcast coming. I take it from Oregon.

So things like that would not normally be the case today.

In fact, by the time of the 1960s or some 30 years later, radio ceased to be an effective front line means of communicating with the peoples of North America.

Not that work could not be done at said time, but a new medium had come to prominence.

In the 50s, this new medium was not adequate for religion. In the early 60s, it certainly was not.

But as time went by, religion as a subject area of human culture and experience came to be one of the themes that could be spread by the use of television.

And we discovered that more and more people were not looking for answers to questions pertaining to religion on radio as much as they were on television, which was a different kind of medium.

And so we went on television.

During the time we were on television, we also used a new stand as time went on in the 70s for the placement and in the early 80s for the placement to the middle 80s, for that matter, of the magazine, The Plain Truth.

Now what we have discovered from 65 to 85 is that television came to be more and more effective and more and more expensive.

The new stands came to be a remarkable means of communicating, and at a time, I think you should listen carefully to this, because planning, both locally in this congregation or collectively from the headquarters, must take into consideration that not every thought is adequately expressed without further evidence when it comes to media.

The implication in 1956 was that radio was dead and television was the way to go.

It turned out to be false. Radio was still the way to go for more than another decade, and television was far too costly for its effectiveness, and the doors to any religious programming or educational programming were not truly open.

And so we had another decade to wait before television came to be a potential use of this work.

I'm speaking in broad time terms.

And then we learned, of course, that now with television and the computer, that people weren't reading that much, that the function of a magazine would not be as it was previously in terms of new stands.

This was a falsehood.

Those who are in media often propagate falsehoods because different forms of media are in competition.

Anyway, in the 70s into the middle 80s, we found the new stands becoming more and more effective as we were told people would be doing less and less reading.

It went through such an extreme that was even said with the computer, we don't even have to be literate.

I wonder what they're reading on the computers, you know, on the screens if they were illiterate.

But these statements are made without very much sanity to back it up.

Anyway, a remarkable thing has happened just as radio came to drift in another direction of talk shows, music, sports, unique programming in which religion does play a role.

Nevertheless, the cost of radio and its effectiveness is on a broad scale useless today unless we adopt something else altogether, such like spot ads or something that lasts just for a few minutes.

With respect to television, television became more and more costly and effective and we came to be one of the two most important programs in terms of the field of religious education in the United States.

But it came to be not cost effective to have a 30 minute program.

But in the meantime, we discovered that the effectiveness of the plain truth on the newsstand was growing.

And then it came to the point that we had to recognize also that people who would take from the newsstand could just stay at a distance.

Pick it up and not be in contact with us, you see.

And so in the end, to be cost effective, we had to make the plain truth unavailable in order that people who had it and wanted it would have to communicate with us by telephone or writing in.

And therefore getting on a list so that we could communicate back with them in other means, which is a very important factor.

And at the same time, we were discovering that the effectiveness of the newsstand was about to turn down.

Why? Not because people are doing less and less reading of magazines, but because more and more people who read are reading magazines.

And the number of magazines are increasing on the newsstand to the point that instead of the plain truth being one of, let's say, 50 magazines, now we are one of, let's say, 500 or more.

And look at the supermarket, look at the row after row after row of magazines.

There are magazines devoted to all fields of sports, entertainment, news, the sciences.

Very few of them, but there still are.

Then we have the remarkable thing, there are even magazines devoted to bicycling, magazines devoted to apartment living.

Things that would once have been a compartment in a single magazine are now separate magazines.

And therefore that door is fundamentally shut in terms of effectiveness.

And then television costs began to grow.

The half hour program became simply not cost effective.

We went to a cost effective medium, the spot ad.

Unfortunately, in the crisis that has befallen the church in the last nine to ten months, we could no longer afford the still effective television spot ad.

But we cannot afford to maintain the television studios and all the technology, the personnel, to make those spot ads.

That still, however, is a potential.

But what has happened is that we have to recognize today that the media, as we knew media for 60 years in this country, radio, publications, television, do not provide any longer a financial base from which to build.

We may utilize some of these in the future.

We are utilizing the magazine because we can handle that through the mail.

Then we have other literature that follows up.

So now we have to recognize that the local church congregations are fundamental to the areas of maturity and growth in this work.

In any case, I would just like to give a few comments here from something that will be posted in editorial.

In fact, I was told I would leave it here, but I would rather mail one that is properly set.

This was a rushed job and you don't end it at the bottom like this.

Graphically, we would do it a bit better, but this was simply done for a meeting yesterday.

We need to provide the local congregations with the opportunity to develop spiritually so that from the local congregation we can have a means of communicating.

We evangelize the world around us, teaching all who hear to obey the commands of Jesus Christ as a part of an outward mission, to repent from sin and to embrace the free gift of salvation by grace.

We also joyously proclaim the return of Jesus Christ in the coming establishment of the fullness of the kingdom of God.

And I would clarify that, which I have objected to editorially for a long time.

The fullness of the kingdom of God is a correct statement, but it is not linked time-wise to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

It is not until he has finished his work, honor in, through, and over the nations that he turns over the kingdom to the Father when the fullness of that kingdom will come, just so you know.

The church is now going to be careful not to misassociate the term fullness merely with the second coming.

Anyway, we have a responsible stewardship and accountability for the financial resources that God makes available to us.

And we have to know how to use those, and therefore we have a new responsibility that has come on Mr. Bernard Schnippert's shoulders.

He is now the person who has been asked to be the new manager in this area.

I would like to just read something from Joseph Tkach Jr.

Last week, my dad announced in a memorandum to department managers and supervisors that Bernard Schnippert, Dr. Bernard Schnippert, he has a doctorate in law, though lawyers don't use the term doctor, so that's not how it is used here, but he is not functioning in that capacity, is the director of financial affairs and planning.

Additionally, Gregory Albrecht is the director of media operations, which today fundamentally is publications.

Mr. Dennis Stouffer, who was acting in the area that Mr. Schnippert, Dr. Schnippert now is, is remaining the budget manager.

We also welcome Jim and Pam Blackwell, who will be serving in Central Illinois, assisting Jeff and Judy McGowan, that's the local church area there, and Eric and Frankie Weinberger, assisting David and Linda Fiedler in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

So we have new appointments in different areas, but there is a major need now to analyze with great care and efficiency how properly to utilize our essentially stable income.

We hope that it will stabilize about where it is for the foreseeable future, and we need to consider how to expand.

I would like to read a few other comments here at this time when we are in a kind of transition.

There is need to maintain local congregations for the nurturing and growth of believers, to provide a collaborative presence as lights in the community, to maintain an administrative center for the organization and support of the ministry and congregation and other collective evangelical efforts, and to teach through printed and electronic media.

Electronic media is not necessarily what it used to be, if you may have thought of it that way, it is a whole new form.

It's possible in fact now to place the plain truth on electronic media and people to read it right off of their home screen rather than to have it come through the mail.

In fact, the ministers today receive the pastor general's report in general, not through the mail.

I don't know how long that's been, probably two months or so or three, no more than that, about three months.

I still get it in local transmission in Pasadena from one building to another.

We do things archaically there.

To offer Christ-centered education, including preparation and continuing education for the ministry, to provide for collective regional, national and international worship and evangelism, and to provide Christ-centered education and recreational programs for youth.

So we need an ongoing education for both professional and lay ministers or simply elders who do not proceed academically.

We need to re-address the question of broadcast evangelism.

I'm editing the copy here to fit in with how I've explained the background.

And then we have our summer camps for the education of young people, which is a very important program.

I grew up where summer camps would have meant nothing.

Summer was a camp.

In the vineyards, in the orchards, in the hop fields, in the chicken yards or houses, we didn't have to go somewhere else for recreation outdoors.

We simply worked outdoors because we lived on the farm.

The bulk of the people today in the cities have had no such experience.

And so a new kind, not paralleling an earlier experience, is important.

And we find some very strange things even at the camp.

It reminds me of the story of a father who said to his son while driving, and they were on a trip, that he would be short of money if they don't carefully watch what they spend, and the boy said to his father, well, why don't you simply put that plastic card in a wall and get some money? That's where he thought money came from.

Eggs come from boxes.

Money comes from walls.

Butter was never associated with cows.

They came from these cartons in a store, and children often grew up without knowing where and how the world around us really begins.

We need increased performance in Christian music and drama as a request.

The coordination and participation in small group ministries, Bible or home Bible studies, Sabbath school programs, youth and other ministries, prayer meetings, etc.

I'll try to mail one of these in a full form, and I'll just retain it.

Here's you some idea.

We also have booklets.

We have a publication you might wish to see called Welcome to Our Fellowship, Worship in the Worldwide Church of God.

The headings, I want to emphasize here.

There is what our mission is, why we are called together, our values and beliefs.

Now, I have been careful, and I want to say this so you correctly understand it.

I have been careful to emphasize wherever possible that we have moved in a world of virtues to values.

Values do not equal virtues.

Nevertheless, we have to recognize today that whereas virtues once represented what the whole nation should have stood for or did, we have substituted all sorts of values, some of which are good and some of which are not.

But the youth magazine cannot have the word virtues in the subhead going with the title, because this is not a world where young people are looking for virtues.

They are presently searching for values.

That is, we have plummeted off the height of virtues through values down into the cesspool of society, where drugs and murders and abuses of all sorts occur.

Now we have to lift them up the ladder steadily.

We must go to make disciples of all nations where we have been, where we are going, and we have a publication here that I would recommend.

I do not know whether every kind of publication has been sent out.

I know some are not and some are, but I am not in a group that has decided what goes out.

Most of you have this or do most of you not? Let me ask the question.

Do most of you have this? If so, raise your hand. The answer is no.

So I would suggest let me at least draw attention to this and you should either ask your local pastor or associate pastor to have a group sent out or to have somebody who goes to Pasadena pick them up.

There is no use mailing them all separately if we could do the other.

Called, welcome to our fellowship so you understand what we think we are in pictures.

If you are missing here, because you weren't in one, that doesn't mean you are not in our fellowship, but we do have some interesting pictures as well as some important aspects of writing.

That I recommend.

There are other publications that from time to time we need to take note of that come out.

One is called a supplement to the plain truth.

I have already mentioned that to you in terms of homosexuality, understanding the struggle.

We have material on drug and alcohol because that is one of the major social problems.

We now have what I would call an updated material supplement to the plain truth.

Also, what do the scriptures say about the Sabbath? Whatever your perspective, you should read it so you know what the church is officially saying.

It may or may not be exactly what every article might have said beginning with January of this year.

Because sometimes there are perspectives that have been asked that were not at that time asked.

Then a very important one in terms of the relationship of the church to world events, current events in the book of Revelation.

This is called Revelation, a vision of victory.

This is completely different from anything that the church has ever said in years past about the book of Revelation.

If you do not know what is said here, have not been reading the articles in the plain truth, you have been short changing yourself with respect to the perspective of the church.

And you need to know the responsibility of a minister who is paid and I am paid is not to hide from you what the church is teaching.

If I don't want you to hear something, then I have a responsibility not to accept a salary.

I do not approve of people who have been in the ministry and did not explain what the church was teaching.

That is not being responsible so long as you are being paid by the church.

Now let me explain, it does not mean that we simply say things because we are paid.

But we do have a job and you have a responsibility to know and to do what the Bereans did to examine.

I make it quite clear this way, I am quite prepared to explain to you if you need to know.

If you are going in some way to an Islamic world, a Buddhist world, I can explain to you and teach you what Islam means to Muslims.

I do not feel that I have to agree with what I have said.

If I am not honest and misrepresent Islam, I have a problem and should have conscience problems.

If I represent it correctly, it does not mean you have to assume because I said it, you must now become Muslims.

But you have a responsibility at least to know carefully what a Muslim thinks and does.

And we have always been praised when we have addressed the question of Islam in the plain truth.

Mr. Keith Stumpf's article was well accepted in the Muslim world without assuming that as a writer he is one.

And so it is important that each of you should know what the church teaches.

I do not have to let you think that I must tell you whether I differ or agree at every point that I am addressing.

And just because I say something does not mean that you should take anything that I say simply for granted.

You do yourself a disservice not to carefully examine what you thought in the past, what you hear in the present, what facts have been brought to bear to alter it, what facts are no longer considered, have all the verses been examined that do have a bearing on it and what you will do about it and analyze why you need to change or why you do not.

Now the reason I emphasize this is that we are clearly in a position of transition.

There is a battle for minds that has been going on for some time.

But we are now in a position of transition and Mr. Tkach's own relationship to his office has limitations that it did not have before.

Because he simply cannot do all the things that he started out doing as pastor general and there has to be a deputy.

And in this period of time we have to know what our responsibility should be.

So let me put it in simple terms so you know why I am here.

Not just in San Bernardino but in the Worldwide Church of God meeting in San Bernardino.

There was a man, Mr. Armstrong's right hand man from another country who was seated next to him in the Bible study one Friday evening in Pasadena who turned to Mr. Armstrong and said, Mr. Armstrong, I wouldn't be here if I didn't agree 100% with the work.

I turned to my wife and said, a year from now he will not be here.

How did I know? He was saying this in 74.

By 75 he was gone.

Frankly I was incorrect.

He was saying this in 75 and before December 75 was over he was gone.

The answer is we don't all agree with each other on everything.

Now there may have been some countries that seemed to have at least 98% of the Germans once voted for Adolf Hitler who were voting.

The fact that you may or may not agree on anything is not the basis of fellowshiping or departing.

As long as the spirit of God is made available to people by this message and you have the freedom to think and do responsibly publicly or privately as a group of people not being divisive able appropriately to discuss or not discuss.

There is no reason why anyone who would disagree on any one point should leave any more than a husband or wife should leave each other if there is a disagreement on any point.

Do we get that clear? Because if you say there are four reasons and that's enough, what about the person who says there are three or there are two or there are one? There is only one.

Mr. Tkach and Mr. Armstrong both pointed out that some of the problems that occurred in the 1930s and have occurred recently are predicated on the assumption that all fellowship is ultimately based solely on doctrinal agreement.

And as soon as you disagree on something that's, quote, a sore point, then you leave.

That's not the way you handle matters.

And so at this time it is important that we reflect on why we are still here and why we should still be here.

When somebody asks a question, I'll put it this way.

Why are you here? Answer, I'm here because you're still here.

They have never had an answer to that one.

I didn't say I would go when you would go.

So Mr. Seifat, I hope the church holds together, based on your telephone call to me, that I should keep you all happily working together.

And I thank those who have varied responsibilities, ordained or not, for having been able to do so in the areas here of San Bernardino and Sun City.

Thank you.