

PASTOR'S REPORT

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CLEARING THE AIR ON A SERIOUS RUMOR

We regret that it is necessary to advise you of another problem we have uncovered.

Let us first say that it is not God's way to accuse. It is not God's way to make public accusations against an individual. God's way is to forgive when a person repents and to cover the wrong. This is what we tried to do.

However, sometimes it is necessary to bring up facts when a failure to do so will perhaps lead some people to fall away from God's Truth. It is to protect the flock that we bring you this information.

Ted Armstrong has been disseminating false and defamatory rumors designed to destroy this Work. The latest accusation concerns Mr. Ray Wright and the financial aspects of God's Work. To save some of the brethren, who may be weak in the faith, from falling away due to not having all the facts, we must again set the record straight.

These are the facts: Ted Armstrong, when he was serving in the office of Executive Vice President of the Church and President of the College, was the direct overseer of God's money. He authorized a member of his staff, Mr. Raymond L. Wright, to misuse monies that the faithful members of God's family had contributed. And, so none of you will doubt, we have that written authorization in our possession.

Ted Armstrong authorized Mr. Wright to pay secretly, out of Church funds, God's money to a private corporation owned by Mr. Wright and Robert Kuhn in Texas. Ted Armstrong's act of authorizing such payment of Church funds laid the foundation and permitted a greater misuse of God's tithe money in subsequent months.

In spite of the clandestine procedures involved, the scheme was uncovered during an audit by Mr. Jack Kessler, and others on the internal auditing staff.

But there is good news in the final analysis. The experience has served to prove the effectiveness of God's auditing procedures and we are pleased to report that by virtue of swift legal action having been taken, God's Work has been able to either recover God's tithe money or obtain adequate assurance of its repayment.

The two men still in God's Work have repented of their involvement in this matter. And when a man repents of his sins God forgives him of the spiritual wrong. He separates his sin as far as East is from the West and he stands clean and forgiven before God.

As the scripture reads, if we do not forgive our brethren once they have repented, then God will not forgive us for our sins (Matt. 6:14-15). Therefore, let us now forgive and forget the matter as to those who remain faithful to God's Work, and go on and defend the Work in renewed faith against those that Satan is using in an attempt to destroy it through every possible means available.

Stanley R. Rader
Ralph K. Helge

FURNISHING INFORMATION REGARDING FALSE AND VILE ACCUSATIONS

It has come to our attention that among other means GTA has now started what appears to be a telephone calling campaign in an attempt to destroy the faith of some members. He is making not only false but vile accusations against the brethren.

It is clear that God holds the Church responsible for preserving the flock; that the Church has a duty to prevent the flock from being led into tribulation or eternal death.

The Church has now had to determine what is the most effective means of protecting the flock from this Satanic attack of false and vile accusations. It has been concluded that refuting each false and vile rumor is not in all cases an adequate means of carrying out its solemn obligation.

The Church has now determined that in order to adequately discharge its duty to preserve the flock, the Church must and will file suit against GTA or his associates under the appropriate circumstances, in order to stop the physical source of the rumors. Such action will be taken against any person who would lend themselves as an instrument of Satan to destroy the flock.

Ted Armstrong has not only been disfellowshipped but is likewise spreading false doctrine or doctrine which is false as applied. Therefore, in the first instance the brethren should not be receiving calls or any other communications from him or his associates (II Jn. 10, Rom. 16:17).

If, however, for any reason such communications have been received in the past or, for any reason are received in the future, the Church is now requesting that all such communications be forwarded to the Church's legal office. As we can assume that a countermeasure Satan would inspire at this point would be to temporarily suspend the false and vile accusations, or to contact people to whom they were made and request that they alter the accusations that were told or not respond to this request.

Therefore, we would emphasize the importance of furnishing information regarding accusations already made as well. Further, we would call to the attention of all the brethren, ministers and members alike, of the spiritual obligation imposed upon the Christian of coming forth as a witness with any facts he knows or has heard of (Lev. 5:1).

Therefore, each and every person who has or does receive a letter or telephone call or any other type of communication, from GTA, or any of his associates, making accusations against God's Church is now being asked to forward the following information regarding the matter to the Church's Legal Office:

Please include the approximate date of the communications, who was involved in the communication, and exactly what was said. If the communication was in writing or taped, please forward a copy.

If it would appear that some of the brethren are likely to fall away by virtue of certain false and vile accusations, and that simply refuting them will not appear likely to prevent this injury, then with this information appropriate action can and will be taken.

So there is no misunderstanding brethren, it must be understood that if legal action is taken, it is not for the purpose of vengeance but simply to discharge the Church's duty to preserve the flock. Further, if the issues were only matters of doctrine, then it would be left to the ministry to carry out one of their primary duties to protect the flock by refuting and stopping the mouth of the gainsayer.

This reporting requirement should be considered as being in addition to any other reporting obligation to any other person or department you may have presently.

Stanley R. Rader
Ralph K. Helge

FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings from cool, rainy Southern California. Our weather has been terribly wet for the past several days, but I know that most of you would consider that a vast improvement over the bitter cold and major snowfalls that have been the lot of so many in the western, central and northern parts of the U.S.A. and Canada. Hopefully, most of you will be able to thaw out a little during the coming January conference.

I am sure that the ministerial conference is very much on everyone's mind at this point, and most of your travel plans have already been finalized. I again want to encourage all of you to use the time we'll be spending together to work on recapturing the camaraderie, the teammanship and the genuine brotherly love in the ministry we once had. If enough of us want it and enough of us will practice that kind of mutual esteem and respect towards each other, in addition to our driving devotion and commitment to this Work, then we cannot fail in the task the living Christ has given to us.

In the recent past, several of you have invited me to come into your areas for a church visit, spending some time with the brethren and perhaps getting together with the area ministers for meetings and a social activity or two. I do want to express my sincere appreciation for all of these invitations. It is my sincere hope and firmest intention to be able to

work as closely as possible with all of you, and as circumstances permit I'll try to accept whatever invitations I can, without neglecting any aspect of the Work under my charge as I assist Mr. Armstrong in the duties of Pastoral Administration internationally.

Unfortunately, there are times when I just can't make it out there because of the many demanding activities here at Headquarters. The "spirit is definitely willing," but it isn't always possible to travel and visit as I'd like. But, I promise I'll keep on trying.

At the risk of appearing repetitious, I do want to again express my personal gratitude for the encouraging example set by so many of you through the various trials, traumas and problems that have come our way over the past few months. Your faith, common sense, courage and commitment to this Work of God will not go unnoticed by God who is very much aware of our reactions and attitudes, when we're under pressure or when difficult times come. Only God knows our hearts and it is He who will some day recognize and evaluate the fruits of our lives and we will be rewarded accordingly.

Thanks again for your letters and memos. I look forward to talking with all of you somewhere along the line. Warmest regards to your wives, families and the brethren in your local area.

Sincerely, in Jesus' name,
C. Wayne Cole

MAIL PROCESSING CENTER UPDATE

Mail Summary: Mail for this December is exceptional. Although our mail count for the year is down slightly when compared with last year, mail for the month is up 57%! Many things are contributing to this good mail flow: renewals to The PLAIN TRUTH are coming in at about 2,000 a day; requests for Mr. Armstrong's book, The Incredible Human Potential, have come in very well; and other mailings to subscribers are producing a good response -- which all adds up to keeping MPC employees very busy. Mail for the year now stands at about 1,766,000 pieces.

"Modern Romans" TV Spot Ad Still Proving Fruitful: Last month we mentioned some of the good results which have come from the series of "Modern Romans" TV spot commercials which were run during last summer. As it happens, there is still more good news to report:

The first two new members resulting from these commercials were recently baptized! As far as we know, these two new people had no knowledge of the Church or our Work until they heard the "Modern Romans" spot ad. And, although only a few months time has elapsed during which they could read The PLAIN TRUTH and other biblical literature, they apparently soon came to see where God is working, were convicted by God's Spirit, and were baptized. Even though the numbers are not large to begin with, this is still good fruit.

Twenty-one new Co-workers have also resulted from the "Modern Romans" commercials. And the original count of 98 Donors has now grown to 268. The PLAIN TRUTH response has also been excellent. Over 20% of all the people who came on file through these spot ads have responded to request The PLAIN TRUTH.

"Hats Off" for a Job Well Done: In closing, we want to express our sincerest gratitude to Dexter Faulkner and the staff of The GOOD NEWS and "Worldwide News" for the excellent service and help they have given to Subscriber Development. Their contribution in producing the "Co-Worker Newsletter" and "Sermon Summaries" have been MUCH appreciated!

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Los Angeles Airport is overcast and it's raining as I sit and write this report in the airport lobby. I'm doing this now so I can phone it in to Richard Sedliacik in order to meet the Monday noon Pastor's Report deadline. We just got off a National Airlines flight from New Orleans where a few of us teamed up from Publishing and Pastoral Administration to hold a workshop-type seminar over the weekend. The seminar was held with a group from the New Orleans and Baton Rouge churches.

The purpose of the seminar was to find out if local church members are interested in becoming involved in the promotion and handling of Quest magazine through newsstands, bookstores, businesses, etc. in their local area. And to show how Quest is benefiting the Work in the outside world plus get feedback in general from members.

Everybody felt the weekend was a great success and thanks to men like Mr. Jim Chapman, Mr. Jim Servidio, and Mr. Karl Beyersdorfer, everything went smoothly. It was both inspiring and exciting to meet new people in God's church and make some new friends. We have planned a few more fact-finding weekends. The next one is in Cincinnati on January 7th. All being well, we will present our preliminary findings at the conference in January.

This was a team effort where Publishing and Pastoral Administration worked on a project of benefit to both areas and the church. Special thanks to Art Mokarow, John Halford, Diane Gilchrist, John Kossey, and other people in Pasadena who made the first session so successful.

--Roger Lippross, Publishing

ON THE WORLD SCENE: THE BREAKTHROUGH TO CHINA

Following an intensive 72-hour flurry of secret diplomacy, President Carter stunned the world on Friday evening, December 15 with a terse televised announcement that the United States and the People's Republic of China had agreed to establish diplomatic relations as of January 1, 1979.

At the same time, Hua Kuo-feng, China's Premier and Communist Party Chairman read the joint communique to about 100 Western and Chinese reporters in Peking -- and afterwards held an unprecedented news conference.

Coincidental with the new agreement, U.S. ties with the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan are to be terminated on the same date, with the special defense treaty between the two nations playing out a year later (terms of the treaty stipulate that it can be terminated one year after either party notifies the other of its intent to do so.)

Reaction in Taiwan was, predictably, one of anger. And Nationalist China's thinning ranks of supporters in the U.S. Congress were outraged. Senator

Barry Goldwater termed the switch from Taipei to Peking "one of the most cowardly acts ever performed by a President of the United States." He vowed to sue Mr. Carter over the abrogation of the defense treaty. Even some Senate liberals were dismayed that the President took the big leap while Congress was in recess -- in full realization that earlier in the year the Senate had passed a 94-0 resolution demanding advanced consultation on the Taiwan defense treaty issue.

Reaction around the world, however, was generally positive, from U.S. allies in Europe, to Japan, Singapore, Thailand, even South Korea. The shock was not that it happened -- the U.S. had been seeking such a relationship ever since President Nixon's ice-breaker trip in 1972 -- but that the final stage toward recognition moved so swiftly. Only in Israel was the reaction basically negative, the mood there reflecting the feeling that if the United States could so easily jettison a loyal ally, and an iron-clad defense treaty with it to boot, then how reliable were U.S. defense commitments to Israel?

How did the on-again-off-again negotiations between Washington and Peking come to a head so quickly? According to the December 25 issue of Time magazine:

"On September 19, Carter prodded the Chinese at his first formal meeting with Ambassador Ch'ai /China's envoy in Washington/ at the White House by again laying out his terms for normalization: Peking must allow the U.S. to keep its economic and cultural ties with the Nationalist Chinese and agree, at least tacitly, not to reunite Taiwan with the mainland by force. The Chinese began dropping strong hints that they were getting ready to accept the U.S. terms. In late November, for instance, Teng told a visiting Japanese delegation that diplomatic relations with Tokyo had been restored 'in one second' and that relations with Washington could be restored in 'two seconds.' In diplomacy, a second can be the equivalent of a week, and, in fact, the final stage of the bargaining took only two weeks."

Teng also started saying, apparently for American consumption, that Peking was willing to be very patient over the Taiwan issue, even if it would take a generation or two or more to reach an amicable solution. In the meantime, the Peking leadership, he stressed, was not against Taiwan retaining its economic and social system. "China has no intention of bringing down Taiwan's living standards," said Teng on one occasion.

In an attempt to keep face, China refused to place such peaceful intentions in writing in the joint communique, lest it appear that a foreign power (the U.S.) were dictating the terms of what China considers an "internal dispute." China did not like, but agreed not to contest, either the one-year retention of the U.S.-Taiwan defense treaty or the U.S. position that it could continue to sell Taiwan defensive military equipment even after January 1, 1980.

Washington felt that for the short-term at least, perhaps till the end of the century, heavily-armed Taiwan faced no immediate threat for three reasons: 1.) Mainland China lacks the offensive capacity to overrun the island fortress 120 miles across the Taiwan Strait in what would surely be a terribly costly assault anyway; 2.) China is tied down facing the Soviets along their long mutual border, and 3.) With Peking's new break-out to Japan, the U.S. and the rest of the West, and her determination to modernize swiftly, a bloody showdown with Taiwan, and resulting possible estrangement from her new allies, was out of the question.

Chinese politics can be extremely volatile but the United States is gambling that the "progressive" forces now in charge of Peking will continue to rule for the foreseeable future.

On China's part, the men in Peking want to more fully tap the technological prowess of America in their modernization drive. They had been saying all along that this was possible in its fullest extent only with diplomatic relations. It could be possible also that the Chinese played a bit upon Mr. Carter's own frustration in foreign relations by grasping the olive branch when they did: after the collapse of the Middle East peace offensive, the President was certainly eager to claim a victory elsewhere.

There are two major consequences of America's new open door to China that should be considered. The first deals with the impact upon the Soviet Union, and, in turn, the Soviets' relations with Europe. UPI reported the following on December 16:

"Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and China will make some Soviet military leaders see Peking as a bigger threat, and may result in an increased build-up of Russian troops on the border between the two nations. Some senior American officers see that type of Russian military diversion as not such a bad thing for the United States' NATO alliance.

"While China's armed forces are no match for the military power of the Soviet Union, U.S. sources familiar with Soviet thinking say that makes little difference in the minds of Russian officers. According to a senior U.S. officer acquainted with Soviet generals, 'Their nightmare is a Chinese attack on a second front if they become involved in a European war.'

"The Soviet Union now spends an estimated 20 percent of its annual military budget of around \$140 billion on its Far Eastern military establishment. While its new SS-20 medium range nuclear missiles are aimed primarily at Europe, launch sites already have been prepared facing China. More than 40 Soviet army divisions are stationed along the Sino-Soviet frontier. That compares to about 70 targeted against NATO nations. There are others deep inside Russia that could be used on either front."

The Soviet Union's paranoia over China has been undoubtedly increased by the new venture by Washington, even though the U.S. disavows the move as being anti-Soviet. Will this increase the chances of a Moscow overture toward Western Europe, especially Germany?

Secondly -- and most important -- the remarkable breakthrough between Washington and Peking could very likely increase the opportunity of the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Up until now, one-fourth of humanity has been effectively blocked off from the gospel announcement. It is Christ who sets before this Church in this age "an open door." Is He the one who is really behind China's remarkable new Open Door to the West and the U.S.? The new year may tell.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau