

PASTOR'S REPORT

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

VOL. 3, NO. 27

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

JULY 16, 1979

FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings from Pasadena! We are all fine here and the International Directors are just now starting to arrive for the conference, which begins tomorrow morning. It is great to see them again and to hear about the growth in their various areas overseas.

Mr. Herbert Armstrong just returned from a very helpful and profitable trip to visit the church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Our minister there, Mr. Don Mason, reported that Mr. Armstrong gave a very warm and loving sermon which encouraged the congregation a great deal. However, because of very serious wrong attitudes and wrong accusations which he made, Mr. David Robinson, the former pastor there, has been terminated from God's ministry.

Also, along this somber note, I do feel compelled to state once again that all ministers who have chosen to go "non-career" are--unless otherwise advised by P.A.D.--to be regarded merely as laymen in God's Church. They are to exercise no ministerial authority or responsibility whatsoever. And any such individual who acts in defiance of this directive--which comes from Mr. Herbert Armstrong--will have to be disfellowshipped and possibly even marked if he is trying to cause division. Mr. Arthur Mokarow, for instance, is no longer a minister of the Worldwide Church of God or any of its affiliates. He is not now in any way employed by God's Work or serving as our representative in any capacity.

If we decide--with Mr. Armstrong's permission--that some few of those who have gone "non-career" or have been "laid off" because of past budgetary cuts should serve in a local elder capacity, we will let that be known to the individual, and to his minister and all his immediate superiors in the Work.

Last Thursday evening, Mr. Dennis Luker buoyantly returned from what he said was a most inspiring conference of all the men in Mr. Ron Kelly's area! Everything seems to be going well in that area. The men are warm and supportive, and Mr. Luker was inspired by their interchange and by the results of the conference.

We hope to hold many more such conferences in your local areas in the months to come, and I am sure we can all be more together in Christian fellowship and service when we have opportunity to talk and think and work together in such an atmosphere.

Speaking of growth and unity, the international areas have had the greatest amount of this in the last year or two. WHY?

Frankly, the answer is not too hard to come by. Because of the fact that many of these areas--such as Britain, France, Germany, etc., have either had very little or no exposure from GTA--they have really been grow-

ing in membership, in financial income and in unity and brotherhood MUCH MORE than many areas in the U.S. Obviously, they were not exposed to the liberalism, playboyism and subtle spirit of self-will and rebellion which was spread so much from GTA and a number of his present followers over the last few years. The "put-downs", the negative attitudes and accusations expressed so often in many areas of the U.S. simply NEVER REACHED many of our international areas in Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, etc. Or, if some of these negative "vibes" did reach those shores, they were so diminished by the time they arrived that it had very little or no effect--especially since we had positive, loyal and enthusiastic leaders in these areas to counteract such garbage!

Therefore, God is BLESSING many of these areas now--and has been for the past few years even during a time of stagnation here in the U.S. That is WHY Britain, New Zealand, and some of these areas are growing 15 to 20% a year and the overwhelming number of our brethren there are loyal and solid and untroubled by the intellectual and spiritual garbage which has been allowed to flow around so freely in certain U.S. church areas.

Let's all back off from our immediate situation from time to time and see this BIG PICTURE!

Frankly, fellows, the time for "fence-sitting" is OVER. I now want to ask every one of you to get SOLIDLY behind Mr. Herbert Armstrong and this Work and to convey that to your congregations in definite, specific and enthusiastic terms! Too many have sat on the sidelines to "wait and see" what will happen. Too many--by lack of enthusiasm, by raised eyebrows and questioning looks and subtly phrased negative intimations--have let their congregations know all too clearly that they are not WHOLEHEARTEDLY supportive of the leadership of God's apostle, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, or this very Work of God.

God tells us: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might..." (Ecc. 9:10).

Sure, we know that there have been misunderstandings, upsets and confusions. But that time should now be over. A loyal and clean and dedicated leadership at Pasadena is now backing God's apostle and the Work and Church are going to go forward. Let's all be sure that we do our parts with ENTHUSIASM to join in this growth and show God and the people under our charge where we stand.

Again, let's become a fervently praying Church and ministry and keep our eye on the BIG PICTURE and on Jesus Christ, our living Head and Savior.

With Christian love,



Roderick C. Meredith

P.S. John Prohs has asked me to add a note regarding the need for members to operate sound systems at each of the festival sites this year. Please announce this need to your congregations. If there are any members who are qualified in this area, please have them write to Mr. Prohs with their sound system experience background, address and telephone number. His address is: John Prohs, 300 West Green St., Pasadena, CA 91123.

ADVANTAGES AND PITFALLS OF HOUSE BUYING

We have received some helpful comments in response to the two articles on transfers and cost of living in the June 25 and July 2 Pastor's Reports. We appreciate the input that has been sent in and welcome any of you who would like to, to send in any ideas or information that you feel should be considered. This would help us in writing anything in the future on this subject by pinpointing specific areas of interest and concern.

One important area that needs to be addressed is the buying and selling of houses by those in the field ministry. A house is a major investment. As in any investment, the greater the potential return the greater the risk is likely to be. Real estate transactions are no exception and for the ministry the risks inherent in buying homes can be even greater than normal due to the periodic requirement to transfer from one area to another.

As explained in Pastoral Instruction 4.3.4 covering relocation, the Church will try to leave a man in an area for a minimum of four years. However, this is not always possible. The Church's current policy is to extend special help to those who are required to move before they have been in an area four years. In the future, we may be able to expand relocation benefits; but our policy will never cover all possible losses. A study is now being done to see if changes should be made in the relocation policy. Various approaches to deal with the problems are being considered to determine what would be the most effective policy--considering both the needs of those being transferred and the costs to the Work.

Even with an ideal relocation policy, buying a house is still going to represent some degree of risk. Anyone who buys a house must be willing to personally shoulder that risk or forego doing so. The Ministerial Housing Allowance--established by the government to help ministers who don't live in a parsonage--does give the ministry a sizable tax break. This is especially true for those buying a house since the mortgage interest expense can legally be deducted twice from taxable income--once as a part of the housing allowance and a second time as interest expense. The dollar value of this tax break has been conservatively calculated at \$1,000 per year for the average minister who owns a home. This, of course, does enable the ministry to assume a somewhat greater risk in the housing market. The tax savings could also be considered at least partial compensation for the loss incurred by having to move every 4-6 years.

The intent of all this isn't to say ministers shouldn't buy homes since in this time of inflation it can be a very practical investment, but we would like to sound a note of caution and discuss the risks that exist in home buying.

Several ministers have suffered rather severe losses in the housing market. A few general points from them may help you avoid similar problems. In buying a house, serious consideration needs to be given to its future salability. A house doesn't have to be a multitowered stone castle with moat and drawbridge located at the top of a mountain to be harder than normal to sell. Such things as an awkward floor plan or a nonstandard architectural design, etc., can substantially affect salability. Even though you may be able and willing to put up with these difficulties, others may not be willing to do so. Such a home is a poor investment.

It is always best to buy a home with the thought in mind of how it will sell. Also, with the price of gasoline going up, locations distant from towns, shopping centers, and usual places of employment may be less attractive. A house that is the most expensive one in the block is generally a poor investment. Such a house will not hold or increase its value as well as the houses around it. While it tends to increase the value of the houses around it, the surrounding houses tend to depress its value.

Another problem in selling is setting a realistic price. In a usual housing market, the higher the price the greater the period of time it will likely take to sell. Therefore, the time available for selling a house needs to be considered in setting a price. It is best to be able to sell your house before you move. A vacant house does not sell as well as one being lived in. Also, the risk of vandalism and maintenance problems increases substantially. The normal risks resulting from changes in market conditions, both in price and demand, need to be kept in mind as well.

We'll have more to say later on the subjects of transfers, living costs, and housing as we develop information. If any of you have specific topics you feel should be discussed, or want to see a specific viewpoint discussed or clarified, please let us know.

--Ted Herlofson, Ministerial Services

CHURCH FILES SUIT TO RECOVER DOCUMENTS

Church attorneys have moved swiftly to prepare and file a lawsuit to recover stolen documents in the Attorney General's possession. As reported last week, the state had resisted in court all of our attorneys' efforts to obtain a list of the documents it possessed until forced by court order to do so. The Church filed this lawsuit Thursday, July 11th, in Pasadena Superior Court (whereas the state's action against the Church was initiated in the Los Angeles Superior Court). Mr. Jack Kessler, of the outside accounting firm for the Church, will also be filing a suit for the return of hundreds of documents which were removed from his office in Century City in early January.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SUPPORTS W.C.G. IN COURT CASE

Editor's Note: Following is an article which appeared in last Saturday's (July 14th) Pasadena Star-News. It includes excerpts of most of a letter to the California Supreme Court from a law firm representing the National Council of Churches, urging the court to accept our request for a hearing in the State's case against the Church. This letter shows the kind of support God's Church deserves, and the National Council of Churches is will-
ing to give us.

The two key paragraphs of Ms. Johansen's letter were not quoted in their entirety in the Star-News article, therefore following the article we have included the entire text of these two paragraphs for the interest of our readers.

By the way, for those who may wonder what an amicus curiae (mentioned in Ms. Johansen's letter) is, briefly stated it means a "friend of the court." This is someone who is not a party to the case the court is considering, but who is submitting his view of the law and perhaps additional facts which could help the judge reach a proper judgment.

Church members supported

By DICK LLOYD

Staff Writer

The National Council of Churches is supporting a group of members of the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God who are seeking to intervene on behalf of the church to invalidate a state suit against the church.

Represented by the law firm of Rosen, Remcho and Henderson of San Francisco, the National Council of Churches has asked the California Supreme Court to grant the local church group a hearing and allow the intervention.

The local church members, calling themselves the Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom, last February were denied permission to enter the case to seek an end to the receivership placed upon them by the Superior Court.

At the time, Judge Robert I. Weil said that the group, whose lead plaintiff is Fred G. Lopez, was not seeking any relief not already sought by the church's attorneys on several previous occasions.

Action by the NCC represents a significant breakthrough for the Worldwide Church which has sought assistance from national religious organizations in its fight against the suit that charges church leaders with misuse of church funds.

The NCC is a religious cooperative agency of 32 national Christian religious bodies with a total membership of more than 40 million persons.

"The National Council of

Churches supports their petition because it directly challenges the constitutionality of California Corporations Code Section 9605 as applied to religious groups organized as non-profit corporations," attorney Robin B. Johanson wrote to the Supreme Court.

"We urge you to accept this case for hearing in order to resolve the fundamental questions which it raises about the proper role of the state in church affairs," she said.

If the Supreme Court grants the hearing the NCC will file an amicus curiae brief in support of the local church members, said Ms. Johanson.

The attorney general claims that the church as a non-profit charitable organization falls under the aegis of the California Corporations Code and therefore the attorney general's office has the authority to assure that charitable trusts, such as churches, educational institutions and the like, collect and spend money according to their own articles of incorporation.

But the NCC claims that the state has violated the constitutional rights of the church.

"The NCC is deeply concerned about the serious invasions of First Amendment freedom that have occurred in the Worldwide Church of God receivership proceedings," said Ms. Johanson. "Quite frankly, the National Council has never before encountered such a sustained and destructive governmental assault

on religious freedom.

"The crux of the state's argument appears to be that by incorporating as a religious non-profit corporation, the church thereby waived its basic First Amendment rights, as well as its right to claim the clergy-penitent and attorney-client privileges," said Ms. Johanson.

She continued, "The state's argument that it has not violated any constitutional protections apparently ignores the fact that the receiver has fired church employees, scrutinized church records, including membership lists and confidential communications, and intercepted and stopped a communication from the pastor to the church's membership worldwide."

She said also that the state and the trial court erroneously contend that "It is the prerogative of the courts to determine whether a matter is ecclesiastical as opposed to business or financial in nature, thus coming within the receiver's jurisdiction and control."

Since many of the religious bodies in the NCC are organized as religious non-profit corporations, the NCC has a vital interest in the case of the state against the Worldwide Church of God, Ms. Johanson claims.

The Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom has asserted it is independent of the church and seeks relief on its own apart from the defense paid for by the church.

The National Council of Churches is deeply concerned about the serious invasions of First Amendment freedom that have occurred in the Worldwide Church of God receivership proceedings. Quite frankly, the National Council has never before encountered such a sustained and destructive governmental assault on religious freedom. The Church's reports of the State's activities would be almost unbelievable were they not supported in full by court transcripts and written documents.

The crux of the State's argument appears to be that by incorporating as a religious non-profit corporation, the Worldwide Church of God thereby waived its basic First Amendment rights, as well as its right to claim the clergy-

penitent and attorney-client privileges. Alternatively, the State appears to argue that none of these rights have as yet been infringed, despite the fact that State officials literally ran the Church between January 2, 1979 and March 2, 1979 and would be running it still had not an appeal intervened. Moreover, the State's argument that it has not violated any constitutional protections apparently ignores the fact that the Receiver has fired Church employees, scrutinized church records, including membership lists and confidential communications, and intercepted and stopped a communication from the pastor to the Church's membership worldwide. In addition, both the State and the trial court contend that it is the prerogative of the courts to determine whether a matter is ecclesiastical as opposed to business or financial in nature, thus coming within the Receiver's jurisdiction and control. As is ably pointed out in the petitions for hearing filed in this and other related cases, the State's contentions fly in the face of virtually every recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States concerning the relationship between church and state.

Footnote: The letter by Ms. Johansen was received by the California Supreme Court on July 3rd and the church's petition was then, ironically, denied by the court on the 5th.

Due to the court's involvement in the public hearings conducted by the Commission on Judicial Performance, and the fact that the holiday of the Fourth of July intervened, we cannot be sure that the court had time to read the letter or even give any consideration to it.

MR. ARMSTRONG BEGINS NEW TV FORMAT, TAPES FEAST MESSAGES

On Sunday, July 15, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong began taping a new format for the World Tomorrow Television Program. The new programs will be interview style with longtime friend and announcer Art Gilmore. These programs are now being taped in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's home in Tucson in lieu of the old format where Mr. Armstrong preached sermons to live audiences around the United States.

For starters Mr. Armstrong taped more than two hours worth of questions and answers. This new series will be topic oriented and the first two topics covered were on government--"Which Shall We Obey--Civil Government Or God's?" (along the lines of Mr. Armstrong's article in last week's Pastor's Report) and an inside look into Mr. Armstrong's personal meetings with world leaders. These programs should be airing on the stations starting around the middle of August to the first week of September. Two weeks ago, Mr. Armstrong delivered for videotaping two Feast messages, one for the opening Friday night session, and then another for the keynote sermon for the first morning of the Feast. This year he delivered the sermons from his home with a small audience sitting in front of him between the cameras, whereas last year Mr. Armstrong taped his Feast message at the Auditorium P.M. services.

We are now in the process of preparing the tapes to be transferred to film. This year we will be sending out about 70 copies worldwide. The opening Friday night welcome message is approximately fifteen minutes in length and the keynote sermon is about 45 minutes. If all goes well the films will be shipped to all overseas Feast sites during the second week of August.

As a final reminder, please don't forget to send those Festival addresses to Sherwin McMichael and/or Rod Matthews by July 21 so you will be able to receive the films of Mr. Armstrong's moving Feast messages.

--Larry Omasta, Television Production

P.T. NEWSSTAND EFFECTIVENESS

I've mentioned several times in this report what a great job all Plain Truth Newsstand co-ordinators are doing. Month in and month out the unsung heroes of the newsstand program keep plugging away. It is still our most valuable program in terms of gaining new readers of our literature.

We must always be trying to improve our newsstand response by being aware of waste or saturation indicated by the magazines not being picked up from one month to the other. With cost effectiveness in mind, Boyd Leeson recently put some figures together for me that shows that a simple one percent increase in response from our newsstand program means that we spend \$20,000 less per month to maintain our present level of responses. This means that every little effort that the newsstand teams can make to improve their local response really pays off. With this in mind we are working on a totally new program to help those in the field improve the handling of their Plain Truth allocations. More on that later.

Just met with Frank Brown, who is in town for the International Conference. It's going to be a busy week for everybody. We are preparing film for a European version of the Introductory P.T., which we discussed at some length.

--Roger Lippross, Publishing Services

ON THE WORLD SCENE

MR. CARTER'S CALL TO ARMS IN THE "ENERGY WAR": In his most emotional speech to date, President Carter, on Sunday evening July 15, called upon the American people to "commit ourselves to a rebirth of the American spirit," and specifically, to "win the war on the energy problem" and rescue the nation from its bondage to foreign oil producers, who now supply nearly half of the nation's oil. "Energy will be the immediate test of our ability to unite the nation."

Reaction both at home and abroad to the president's nationally televised address, and his two follow-up speeches the next day in Kansas City and Detroit, generally can be summed up this way: long on emotions but short and repetitive on specifics.

The President actually gave two speeches on Sunday, the first one being an impassionate plea for moral resurgence in the nation as a whole--though very short on specifics here as well. He probed no causes and gave no solutions, choosing only to outline the symptoms of America's post-Vietnam, post-Watergate malaise. These symptoms of America's "crisis of confidence" are everywhere, he said: "For the first time, a majority of our people believe that the next five years will be worse than the past five years....There is growing disrespect for government, for the churches, schools, the news media and other institutions."

Though some observers said Mr. Carter "sounded like a Baptist preacher" giving the type of campaign "sermon" that won him one primary after another on his road to the White House, he didn't address the real moral and spiritual crises affecting the nation which have resulted in the lifting of God's blessings from it--the shocking divorce and illegitimacy rates, the morass of drug and alcohol addiction, especially among the young, the abominable crime statistics (on an upward swing now again) as well as the tidal wave of social legislation which runs counter to the laws of the God. Mr. Carter appealed to for help at the end of his speech. All such real crises lay outside the purview of his 33-minute address.

Mr. Carter counselled the American people to "have faith"--but not in God. Instead, he said, "We simply must have faith in each other, faith in our ability to govern ourselves and faith in the future." The President also spoke a "smooth thing" (see Isaiah 30:10) when he appealed: "Whenever you have a chance, say something good about our country."

Government to the Rescue

The President referred to the "isolated world of Washington" and said that "the gap between our citizens and our government has never been so wide."

Yet, ironically, it is to be the government which will rescue the nation from its energy dilemma. The President called for the establishment of an Energy Security Corporation as well as an Energy Mobilization Board. The latter would cut through red tape--government red tape generated by conflicting government agencies--to order completion of energy projects such as refineries and pipe lines.

In response, a vice president of Mobil Corporation said: "It's sort of an irony that we need a government-created board to break government bottle-necks." An official of Getty Oil added: "It's incredible that you have to create a whole new bureaucracy just to sweep up after the old one."

The new layer of bureaucracy is to preside over a ten-year crash program to produce alternate and synthetic fuel sources, and will be--at \$142 billion--the "most massive commitment of funds in our nation's history," said Mr. Carter. Nearly all the money will be raised by taxing the so-called "wind-fall profits" of the oil companies.

The president appealed to the American public to rally around him in unison to win the energy war, but it is all too clear that unlike World War II, in which the government mobilized resources through the War Production Board, there is no clearly perceived enemy. Many people blame "Big Oil" for the gas shortages, others (and more correctly) Big Government, with its ham-stringing restrictions on the market. And now the government is trying to focus the blame away from itself and almost solely on OPEC.

Far from a unified approach, the ambitious new energy program is bound to divide the nation even further. An all-out effort to strip-mine the coal from Montana and the shale oil from Colorado is bound to anger environmentalists. Protracted court battles will ensue. And those concerned over the environment certainly have a case when it comes to the matter of synthetic fuel production. The cost is immense, both in dollars and in the impact upon land and water.

"Synfuel" production from shale and coal would demand immense amounts of water (2 to 3 barrels for every barrel of shale oil) from two of the nation's most water-starved regions, the Colorado River Basin and the Northern Great Plains. Making one million barrels of oil from shale a day, equivalent to an eighth of the current oil imports, would require moving a billion tons of rock and residue each year, roughly the same amount of material excavated in the building of the Panama Canal.

The new federal energy super-bodies will also do constant battle with state environmental agencies, such as those in California which don't want more refineries or interstate pipelines crossing their "sovereign" soil.

The push for coal will also cost additional billions for the rebuilding and relocation of railroad facilities. Then there will be the push to develop "coal-slurry" pipelines, which transport a powdered-coal mush. These systems gulp prodigious amounts of water--again from the driest half of the U.S.

Thus the president's plan could result in a multi-billion dollar fiasco and only further split a badly divided nation.

Foreign Reaction: Dollar Down, Gold Up

It's worth noting that foreign reaction, especially economic, to the all-out energy push was generally negative. The dollar declined almost everywhere and gold zoomed up to \$292.87 an ounce, a new all-time high.

Throughout Europe, official reaction to the speech was polite, but newspapers and bankers were openly negative. "The President really didn't say much," said a Zurich banker. An Italian broker added: "That speech was just a pep talk that solved nothing, and that's why the dollar fell." The governor of the Bank of Greece said, bluntly: "What he announced is not enough."

The Communist Chinese paid particular attention to the negative mood of the address. China's official news agency reported the speech at length--mentioning Carter's self-critical account of his leadership, and his mention of America's self-doubts about its sense of purpose.

All in all, few believe the nation is in a mood to believe that Mr. Carter has the answers or that he could lead the American people in the "energy war."

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau

MEMBER'S HOTLINE

WORLDWIDE EDITION

MR. ARMSTRONG VISITS S.E.P. CAMPUS, BEGINS RECORDING WATS LINE MESSAGES

Last Sabbath, July 7th, Mr. Armstrong flew to Orr, Minnesota to speak to the teenagers attending S.E.P. It was Mr. Armstrong's first visit since 1970, and he was amazed at the changes which had taken place at the Orr campus. After a brief tour of the facilities, Mr. Armstrong was warmly greeted by all. Students and adults gave a standing ovation of appreciation as Mr. Armstrong entered the building, as well as when he got on stage. All were attentive throughout the sermon, and a tape of Mr. Armstrong's message is being sent out to all the congregations.

Mr. Armstrong has also begun making the WATS line taped messages so that members of the ministry can call in and hear what is going on at headquarters. The first tape, made on board the G-II during the return trip from Orr last Sabbath, is the first of the once-a-week news tapes he will be doing. As Mr. Armstrong finds the time, perhaps the tapes will become bi-weekly. However, with Mr. Armstrong working harder than ever, his schedule may not permit the "two-a-week" series.

CHURCH FILES SUIT TO RECOVER DOCUMENTS

Church attorneys have moved swiftly to prepare and file a lawsuit to recover stolen documents in the Attorney General's possession. As reported last week, the state had resisted in court all of our attorneys' efforts to obtain a list of the documents it possessed until forced by court order to do so. The Church filed this lawsuit Thursday, July 11th, in Pasadena Superior Court (whereas the state's action against the Church was initiated in the Los Angeles Superior Court). Mr. Jack Kessler, of the outside accounting firm for the Church, will also be filing a suit for the return of hundreds of documents which were removed from his office in Century City in early January.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SUPPORTS W.C.G. IN COURT CASE

Editor's Note: Following is an article which appeared in last Saturday's (July 14th) Pasadena Star-News. It includes excerpts of most of a letter to the California Supreme Court from a law firm representing the National Council of Churches, urging the court to accept our request for a hearing in the State's case against the Church. This letter shows the kind of support God's Church deserves, and the National Council of Churches is will-
ing to give us.

The two key paragraphs of Ms. Johansen's letter were not quoted in their entirety in the Star-News article, therefore following the article we have included the entire text of these two paragraphs for the interest of our readers.

By the way, for those who may wonder what an amicus curiae (mentioned in Ms. Johansen's letter) is, briefly stated it means a "friend of the court." This is someone who is not a party to the case the court is considering, but who is submitting his view of the law and perhaps additional facts which could help the judge reach a proper judgment.

Church members supported

By DICK LLOYD

Staff Writer

The National Council of Churches is supporting a group of members of the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God who are seeking to intervene on behalf of the church to invalidate a state suit against the church.

Represented by the law firm of Rosen, Remcho and Henderson of San Francisco, the National Council of Churches has asked the California Supreme Court to grant the local church group a hearing and allow the intervention.

The local church members, calling themselves the Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom, last February were denied permission to enter the case to seek an end to the receivership placed upon them by the Superior Court.

At the time, Judge Robert I. Weil said that the group, whose lead plaintiff is Fred G. Lopez, was not seeking any relief not already sought by the church's attorneys on several previous occasions.

Action by the NCC represents a significant breakthrough for the Worldwide Church which has sought assistance from national religious organizations in its fight against the suit that charges church leaders with misuse of church funds.

The NCC is a religious cooperative agency of 32 national Christian religious bodies with a total membership of more than 40 million persons.

"The National Council of

Churches supports their petition because it directly challenges the constitutionality of California Corporations Code Section 9505 as applied to religious groups organized as non-profit corporations," attorney Robin B. Johanson wrote to the Supreme Court.

"We urge you to accept this case for hearing in order to resolve the fundamental questions which it raises about the proper role of the state in church affairs," she said.

If the Supreme Court grants the hearing, the NCC will file an amicus curiae brief in support of the local church members, said Ms. Johanson.

The attorney general claims that the church as a non-profit charitable organization falls under the aegis of the California Corporations Code and therefore the attorney general's office has the authority to assure that charitable trusts, such as churches, educational institutions and the like, collect and spend money according to their own articles of incorporation.

But the NCC claims that the state has violated the constitutional rights of the church.

"The NCC is deeply concerned about the serious invasions of First Amendment freedom that have occurred in the Worldwide Church of God receivership proceedings," said Ms. Johanson. "Quite frankly, the National Council has never before encountered such a sustained and destructive governmental assault

on religious freedom.

"The crux of the state's argument appears to be that by incorporating as a religious non-profit corporation, the church thereby waived its basic First Amendment rights, as well as its right to claim the clergy-penitent and attorney-client privileges," said Ms. Johanson.

She continued, "The state's argument that it has not violated any constitutional protections apparently ignores the fact that the receiver has fired church employees, scrutinized church records, including membership lists and confidential communications, and intercepted and stopped a communication from the pastor to the church's membership worldwide."

She said also that the state and the trial court erroneously contend that "It is the prerogative of the courts to determine whether a matter is ecclesiastical as opposed to business or financial in nature, thus coming within the receiver's jurisdiction and control."

Since many of the religious bodies in the NCC are organized as religious non-profit corporations, the NCC has a vital interest in the case of the state against the Worldwide Church of God, Ms. Johanson claims.

The Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom has asserted it is independent of the church and seeks redress on its own apart from the defense paid for by the church.

The National Council of Churches is deeply concerned about the serious invasions of First Amendment freedom that have occurred in the Worldwide Church of God receivership proceedings. Quite frankly, the National Council has never before encountered such a sustained and destructive governmental assault on religious freedom. The Church's reports of the State's activities would be almost unbelievable were they not supported in full by court transcripts and written documents.

The crux of the State's argument appears to be that by incorporating as a religious non-profit corporation, the Worldwide Church of God thereby waived its basic First Amendment rights, as well as its right to claim the clergy-

penitent and attorney-client privileges. Alternatively, the State appears to argue that none of these rights have as yet been infringed, despite the fact that State officials literally ran the Church between January 2, 1979 and March 2, 1979 and would be running it still had not an appeal intervened. Moreover, the State's argument that it has not violated any constitutional protections apparently ignores the fact that the Receiver has fired Church employees, scrutinized church records, including membership lists and confidential communications, and intercepted and stopped a communication from the pastor to the Church's membership worldwide. In addition, both the State and the trial court contend that it is the prerogative of the courts to determine whether a matter is ecclesiastical as opposed to business or financial in nature, thus coming within the Receiver's jurisdiction and control. As is ably pointed out in the petitions for hearing filed in this and other related cases, the State's contentions fly in the face of virtually every recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States concerning the relationship between church and state.

Footnote: The letter by Ms. Johansen was received by the California Supreme Court on July 3rd and the church's petition was then, ironically, denied by the court on the 5th.

Due to the court's involvement in the public hearings conducted by the Commission on Judicial Performance, and the fact that the holiday of the Fourth of July intervened, we cannot be sure that the court had time to read the letter or even give any consideration to it.