

# PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE  
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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APRIL 10, 1981

## MR. ARMSTRONG SPEAKS TO COMBINED CHURCHES AT CHICAGO AND SALEM, OREGON

by Herbert W. Armstrong

BEG PARDON. In the rush of a busy schedule since returning to my desk in Pasadena, I neglected to report to you in last week's Report about the combined service in Chicago. It was the first time I had spoken to our brethren in the Chicago area for thirteen years. The churches in that area have grown tremendously in those years--3,700 brethren were in attendance.

The service was held in the world famous Auditorium Theater on famed lake front Michigan Boulevard. I told our brethren there I thought I had attended an orchestral concert in that giant auditorium around 1920--but later I decided the hall I had attended was Orchestra Hall, on the same street. The Auditorium Theater has a famed history. It seats 4,000--an immense theater with perfect acoustics. It was opened three years before I was born, in 1889, by President Benjamin Harrison. It has a long and fabled history. It is not only immense--it is exceedingly ornate. Such famous artists as Caruso and many others of my father's generation have sung there--in fact every world-renowned performing artist of those years around the turn of the century.

It is still a magnificent auditorium. Twice when the mike slipped from my coat lapel and there was no amplification, the people there heard me distinctly anyway.

At the combined meeting at Denver two weeks before, I met many brethren I had not seen for years--and again at Chicago.

I had lived in Chicago from 1915 to 1922--seven years. I had an office in the heart of the congested downtown "loop"--at 123 West Madison. It was an experience to see Chicago again and meet many brethren there.

The giant auditorium was virtually packed--3,700 brethren were there. I spoke on the UNIQUENESS of the Philadelphia era of the Church and the tremendous responsibility of our COMMISSION! While the Bridegroom tarried a while "they all slumbered"--the whole Church. But the midnight cry must now GO OUT! ARISE! Be sure our lamps (Bibles) are filled with oil--THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS WHICH WILL ILLUMINATE OUR BIBLES SO WE UNDERSTAND AND ARE AROUSED--ALERTED--AWAKENED! The Work must drive ahead at terrific speed!

After the service, I had a meeting with the ministers and wives from the entire area.

2,300 at SALEM, OREGON

Again the next Sabbath, April 4, eleven of us flew up to Salem, Oregon, for a combined meeting of brethren at the 26th anniversary of the Salem Church. There were 2,300 in attendance--including the Portland and Eugene churches, and even as far south as Medford, Klamath Falls, and other points in Oregon.

I gave a similar message as a week before at Chicago, and we had a splendid meeting with some fifty or sixty ministers and wives in a special meeting afterward.

I intend to continue speaking on the same theme--the UNIQUENESS of the Commission God has given us compared to any other era of the Church since Christ founded it in 31 A.D. Christ's commission to us is DIFFERENT in many respects from that of the Church at any other time or generation. Ours is the END-TIME Message, preparing the way for Christ's second coming.

The Church has been slumbering and sleeping spiritually for several generations. By, and after, 70 A.D. the Church had to flee--and again in the Middle Ages. It had to meet secretly because of persecution from the governments of the Roman Empire, and the medieval "Holy Roman Empire," under the fallen great woman, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (Rev. 17:5).

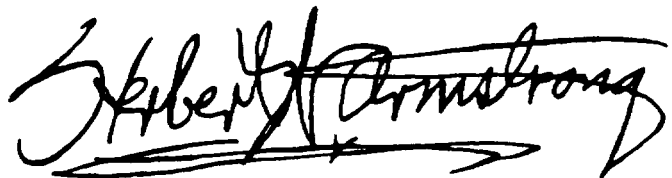
The Church was slumbering and sleeping spiritually when I first came among the Sardis era. But the midnight hour struck when this voice began crying out the message of the Kingdom of God and Christ's imminent return to restore the Government of God and establish that Kingdom. The "midnight hour" was to strike as a warning before Christ's coming (Matt. 25:6). IT HAS STRUCK. WE ARE THE CHURCH THAT MUST AWAKE! After us will come--out of the soon-coming "GREAT TRIBULATION"--the lukewarm Laodicean Church.

But WE have a very special commission, preparing the way for Christ's coming (Mal. 3:1-5), and raising up the SPIRITUAL TEMPLE (Eph. 2:21) to which Christ will soon come.

My early ministry, just prior to raising up of the Philadelphia Church, was in the area of Salem and Eugene, Oregon. It was great to be back there and speak to so many brethren there.

I am planning to speak to combined groups of our churches about every two weeks--at such centers as New York, San Francisco, Cincinnati, St. Petersburg, Fla., New Orleans, Toronto, Washington D.C. or Philadelphia, Lake of the Ozarks, and other centers.

I plan a visit to our Churches in Australia and New Zealand in May, and England and Germany in July. I have a VERY BUSY SCHEDULE AHEAD!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herbert Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script. There are several horizontal lines drawn underneath the signature, possibly indicating a signature line or a decorative flourish.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICESFestival Office Update

The Festival Team continues working together in assisting Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in planning and executing the decisions regarding the 1981 Feast of Tabernacles. However, since Dr. William Kessler has been recently transferred to the field ministry to serve in the Nashville, Tennessee area, any routine questions and inquiries relative to the Feast and festival planning should be forwarded to Doug Horchak--who will be assisting in coordinating Festival Operations and Planning for the Festival Team.

The Festival Office phone number is 213-577-5210 for those not able to use the WATS line. Those able to use the WATS line should call 800-423-4464 and leave a call-back message.

Policy Re: Ministerial Transfers for the Feast of Tabernacles

Mr. Herbert Armstrong has asked that all of the ministry in our employ be REQUIRED to attend their assigned feast site with their local congregation. The Feast of Tabernacles is considered a part of your routine responsibilities in serving the brethren even though you may have no specific assigned duties at the site your congregation is attending.

The members have to use their vacation time to attend the Feast; however, the ministry can request personal time off at other times during the year.

Only those who are requested to fill a need in another site will be allowed to transfer. However, if you feel there are extenuating circumstances in your case, write a memo to Ministerial Services for approval. We trust this will help all of you in your festival planning.

Festival Attendance List to Arrive Soon

The first copy of the Festival Attendance List should reach all pastors of churches by the end of April; therefore it should be available for use by the first Sabbath in May. You will have three weeks (the Sabbaths of May 2nd, 9th, and 16th) to record the plans of as many of the members as possible before mailing the list back to Pasadena.

Please be sure you have read the instructions in the Festival Advisor's Guidebook relative to the Attendance List and have someone appointed to gather that information. You may want to make special preparations now for collecting this information on the three Sabbaths stated above.

Further instructions will accompany the list.

\*\*\*\* TO BE ANNOUNCED \*\*\*\*

FESTIVAL HOUSING RESERVATIONS

The April 6th Worldwide News, containing housing information on Feast sites in the U.S. and Canada as well as information on overseas sites, is off the press and should be in most members' hands during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In general, it is up to each of you to reserve housing for your household by contacting the establishment directly. There are slight variations on this procedure in Cape Cod, Squaw Valley, and Wisconsin Dells. Please read carefully the instructions for the site you wish to attend and follow them explicitly.

There are also basic instructional articles on housing and problem-solving in the same issue of the Worldwide News. Make sure you have also read and understood this material before making your reservations.

You may make housing arrangements as soon as you have decided where you plan to attend. However, those who are requesting transfers to Hawaii, Rapid City and Squaw Valley should be prepared to cancel their reservations if their transfers cannot be approved. Transfer approvals should be sent out about June 10. (See related article in the WN Festival Planner.)

If you have any further questions, see your Feast Advisor.

--Festival Office

International News

News Flash! Last week we mentioned that the French-language edition of the World Tomorrow broadcast--Le Monde A Venir--had ceased going out on Europe No.1.

This week God has reopened the door of Radio Luxembourg! Commencing April 30th, Le Monde A Venir will be aired again at 10:30 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

Radio Luxembourg covers all of the French-speaking areas of Europe and this good time slot will make the message available to millions of listeners who may never have heard it before!

Appreciation for the Refresher Program

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Warmest greetings to you and your wife. My wife Jan and I would like to thank you so much for making it possible for us to attend the seventh session of the Refresher Programme. As well as updating,

it confirmed what we had been taught at Bricket Wood by such loyal men as Mr. Raymond McNair and Mr. Leon Walker. We are so pleased they are being used again so powerfully in God's Work. As you know, Bricket Wood was used as a whipping post and ridiculed by some. It hurt. Of course it wasn't perfect, but one quality was greatly stressed--loyalty to God's government and to the truth Christ revealed through you.

On the subject of teaching, it occurred to me the other day how revealing it will be in the world tomorrow to have history courses taught by Noah, Abraham, Joseph and the apostles!

Sometimes when I hear you speak or read one of your letters, tears come internally or externally because I realize you are the end-time Apostle and that God does especially inspire you. We certainly know you are a mortal human being, that you can make mistakes, but you are very special nevertheless. Humans are inclined to say if only we had lived in "Bible times" and could hear the original apostles preach when we DO live in Bible times and we DO have a real apostle. If we do believe you are the Apostle, I know we must be careful to heed what you say! Your character and diligence are an inspiration to us.

Paul and Jan Linehan

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Thank you sir for the inspiration you have given to the Refresher Program! It has been the most rewarding experience my wife and I have had in our seven years of serving God's people.

The spirit and feeling of unity and teamwork now flow through the campus and administration everywhere. We have been strengthened and excited about what God has inspired here through you and now our greatest desire is to share this with the flock you have asked us to shepherd in Champaign.

It is true that the unity, zeal, and feeling of oneness here has to be experienced in order to understand fully how much our great God has been actively moving His hand over the campus and renewing us through you. We appreciate you, Mr. Armstrong, now more than ever before.

Randy and Beth Holm

Dear Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong:

Greetings from the South Pacific tiny Polynesian Island Kingdom of Tonga--from the church of 52 members and children out of the nation's population of 100,000 people!

It was a great joy and encouragement for me to see you with my eyes and hear you with my ears as you came in and conducted the "Congress" meeting of the leading ministers in the Hall of Arts in the Ambassador College in Pasadena on Wednesday 26th February. It was very encouraging news for the brethren here when I told them the story of the meeting with you.

I am so grateful and thankful to you, Mr. Armstrong, and to your most loyal and humble dedicated assistants and all others God commissioned through you to create this invaluable Ministerial Refresher Program for teaching and perfection of our responsibility. The great benefit I have learned from this short Refresher Program is of great value for my life and for the Church here as a whole.

Thank you once again for setting us the example and the courage to follow to achieve the goal of our calling. With best regards and much love to you, Sir.

I. Tolu Ha'angana,  
Local Elder--a Native Tongan  
of the Polynesian Race

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Just had to send a note of appreciation and thanks for the Refresher Program during the month of February. So happy to have been there and to see you in person the day you came to the Ambassador College campus. Certainly want to thank all of the ministers that took time and effort to teach and train all of us to speak the same thing, so we can be a more effective tool in Christ's hands to finish this work we have been given to do.

My wife and I pray daily for you and the Work.

I think even you do not realize what an inspiration you are to others as we see you get up and speak to world leaders, at your age, with the eyesight you have. At one time I lost 85% of my eyesight with cataracts. I was giving sermonettes and my wife would print out scriptures in letters about an inch high. I never could have done that but I thought well, if Mr. Armstrong can get up before world leaders, surely I can get up before a local church group. I am sure you have inspired many others in the same way.

There is no doubt in our minds who and where God's Apostle is today.

Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for having the character not to water down God's truth against all odds. We love you and are 100% behind you and God's Work.

Don and Rea Bailey

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

After attending one week of the Refresher Program, I want to express my feelings about the course. I was very favorably impressed with the value of the program, and to be reminded about the role of a minister.

The program was a good reminder of what God's Word says about many of the doctrines of the Church. I now see why so many ministers have written you and expressed their gratitude for the help and inspiration they received.

The spirit that prevailed among those attending was one of unity and thankfulness for the opportunity to be refreshed in God's Word. The motto of Ambassador College certainly is appropriate for the program. "Recapturing True Values" was the order of the day.

The men you have selected to serve in Ministerial Services certainly displayed an attitude of dedication and loyalty to God's Work. I came away with a renewed zeal and determination to be a more responsible and dedicated servant of God.

Thanks again for the course, and may God continue to give you the strength and inspiration you need to carry out the responsibility you have in doing God's Work.

Jim Fenester

Dear Mr. Joseph Tkach:

Belated greetings from the Polynesian Island Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific! I wish to thank very much you and the team whom God inspired and guided in all teachings and admonitions of us during the eighth class session from 9th to 27th February, 1981.

It was a great benefit indeed to have had the opportunity to attend and learn exactly what the Church teachings from the Word of God are. The Church here in Tonga was so thankful for the opportunity given me.

Again, the whole Church here in Tonga wishes to convey to the Apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong and to all the ministry there in headquarters, our warmest regards and 100% wholehearted firm stand in loyalty to him and the great Work. With much love to you all.

I. Tolu Ha'angana

#### Comments From Monthly Church Reports

OAK HILL, W.VA--CHARLES R. CRAIN: Brethren in the Oak Hill area are solid and enthusiastic about the Church and the Work of God. The Church has continued to grow as new people come along. Things are progressing positively in the area and many new people continue to seek out the Church. The interest is high.

CUMBERLAND-HAGERSTOWN, MD--WILLIAM R. PACK: Attended the 7th session of the Refresher Program--FANTASTIC!! The brethren are very anxious to hear and respond to the many positive directives gained from the Refresher Program.

NORFOLK, VA--DANIEL C. HALL: PM's are making progress as they study THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL and other basic literature. Mr. Armstrong's January 20th letter was very motivating and inspiring, causing many to comment how it has stirred them to work harder as we approach Christ's return.

JACKSON, TN--JOE E. DOBSON: Church is becoming more aware of the shortness of time. Responsiveness is improving. People are overcoming.

LONGVIEW, TX / SHREVEPORT, LA--BILL BRADFORD: We are having very good response from some to sermons, and even lessons they are learning on their own. It seems that some people in the Church are having trials of their own which is producing good fruit. They are studying and praying and learning lessons they seem to have neglected before. It is encouraging to see this spiritual growth among a significant portion of the congregation.

DENISON, TX--GERALD WITTE: Good enthusiasm regarding the Bible study tapes.

HARRISON, AR--TOM BLACKWELL: Much good comment about GN issue on Bible authenticity.

MT. POCONO, PA--O.G. ENGELBART: Brethren are very excited about having the Feast of Tabernacles in Mt. Pocono this fall.

ANN ARBOR, MI--JEROLD W. AUST: The brethren are uplifted by Mr. Armstrong's journey to the Far East and his campaigns. We are all hoping for increased radio and television coverage. YOUTH 81 is a beautiful magazine and very helpful for the youth and adults alike! We have to run to keep up with Mr. Armstrong.

CHAMPAIGN, IL--R. HOLM: Y.O.U. members as well as the whole Church are enthused over the new YOUTH 81 magazine! Mr. Armstrong's guidance of Y.O.U. is much appreciated.

RALEIGH, NC--MIKE BOOZE: The brethren have been enjoying the Bible study tapes by Mr. Armstrong.

#### Even the Chickens Keep the Sabbath!

We are three members and two prospectives here in a small settlement of just about two hundred people, in the heart of India. Five out of two hundred is indeed a big number for the Church of God, and that is why we are the focus of attention in all that happens, both good and bad.

People are amazed that we keep the Sabbath despite opposition and persecution. All of us have our jobs threatened. We have been labelled and maligned, and local thugs have even "warned" us. But it seems strange to these people that we still get together on Saturdays, sing hymns heartily, work hard on Sundays, and to make things worse did not join their Christmas festivities. So the local saying goes "the local shadow of Saturday is on us." That one of us used to be a Methodist minister at one time, makes it all the more inexplicable. And to top it all his poultry also decided to keep the Sabbath--they have stopped laying eggs on Saturday!

Susy Aya Ram (Moradabad, India)

#### Weekly Letter Comments

Firstly, our comments show how God Almighty is truly mindful of His people. He is blessing and providing for them, sometimes in remarkable and unexpected ways. Then Ambassador students express their appreciation for their unique opportunities to recapture true values. Finally, readers



are grateful for the Work's freely given literature. They find our magazines and booklets inspiring, informative and edifying.

### God Blesses and Provides

Two years ago, I was a student of Electrical Engineering at the S.V.U. College of Engineering, Tirupati. I used to think that since the universe is totally without meaning; totally without reason or justice, or mercy and with absolutely nothing left but the hugger-mugger, hurly-burly, ramshackle beauty of litter and chance and chaos, there is no cause why we should take anything seriously and make any effort seriously about anything at all. I drifted along recklessly and carelessly. I failed in most of the subjects and consequently I lost one complete year. My moral degeneration was complete.

Fortunately, one of my lecturers came to my rescue and lent me some old copies of The PLAIN TRUTH. At first, I cursed him. But I couldn't escape the strange fascination of your articles. Particularly your booklet WHY WERE YOU BORN? dealt a crushing blow to my miserable existence. Life once again became meaningful and interesting to me. I worked hard for my studies and stood second in my class. I have successfully completed my Bachelor's degree with distinction and now I have obtained admission to the post-graduate course in one of the most prestigious institutions in our country.

I want to record my deep sense of gratitude for putting me on the right path again.

K. Vijaya Mohan Reddy (Kanpur, India)

Since being in God's great Work, our lives have been very much blessed. Our marriage has blossomed and been greatly enriched and revitalized. Our lives have been filled with great fulfillment and purpose! The blessings of our great God are truly great.

It is hard to comprehend the entire purpose and calling we have received, for nothing we ourselves have done makes us worthy of God's promises! As you [Mr. Armstrong] have said so often before, because of our sins we all deserve to die. However, through God's far-reaching love for mankind, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (the Being through which all things were originally created) became human and shed His blood for the redemption of the sins of the entire world! Such love is hard to completely understand, even with God's Spirit in us!

Barry & Joanne Curley (Anaheim, CA)

My husband is in the construction field and has only been partially employed since the Feast. And yet, God has seen fit to provide us with what we need. It hasn't been easy, but we are amazed at how much God has blessed us. Friends outside the Church can't understand how we've been able to make it. Physically speaking, neither can we! But we know there is a great God who cares for us and gives to us abundantly, and He is the one who has stretched every penny we had.

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Robinson (Curtis, NE)

I've been wanting so badly a love seat for my little room, one that opens into a bed. But after your letter I decided I could live with what I had and so sent that money to the Work. Today I received a call from my daughter. A friend had given her exactly what I wanted and she is bringing it to me! God is so wonderful!

Mrs. Ida A. Rice (Burton, MI)

Let me share a great blessing God has given my family. Very recently, my wife gave birth naturally, without any drugs, to a baby girl! Unfortunately, two years before she had our first-born son through a Caesarean section. All the doctors we talked to said she had no chance of giving birth vaginally. However, she had only eight hours of labor--and handled it extremely well. We prayed for God's courage and He answered our prayers.

J.K. (Henderson, NC)

I wanted to send this small offering because just the other day we were given all kinds of men's clothing and shoes--just the size my husband is able to wear. There were some brand new clothes and some that had hardly been worn. I feel this was a direct blessing from God, lifting the burden of us having to buy these very articles.

Last week we had talked about how we might be able to buy some of these same things that my husband needed so badly and hadn't been able to afford.

Edith L. Gerron (Indianapolis, IN)

I have been specially blessed since God called me. He has now blessed me with a clean mind, right knowledge, wisdom and understanding to live a good life, loving friends, a job, good health, sound financial knowledge, and a lovely watch which I got as a gift at my first-ever Feast of Tabernacles in 1980.

One Sabbath evening when I was returning from where I had been listening to "The World Tomorrow" broadcast, God also saved me from a thug attack. On the following morning I recovered the 12 Correspondence Lessons which my attackers had scattered on the road when they fled--to my surprise, as I didn't try to resist or chase them. There are many other cases where the Eternal supernaturally intervened, including the time I asked for a few cents to buy bread when I was hungry and still looking for a job. I really learned to live by faith.

S.P. (South Africa)

#### Students Cherish Opportunities at Ambassador College

Thank you so much for allowing God to use you to put the Church and College back on the track. I am a student at Ambassador, and I would not want to be anywhere else. So many things to learn and do and so many opportunities! I can't thank God enough for the Church, the ministers, the College, the people and everything that goes with it. Keep up the good work, Mr. Armstrong. We are all praying for you.

Scott Friesen (Pasadena, CA)

Thank you for allowing me to attend Ambassador College. It is a wonderful environment. I thank God for giving you the vision to establish such a wonderful institution. Enclosed is a check for my first tithe. Please use it in furthering the good news of the coming of our Lord.

Renita Lawson (Pasadena, CA)

I am sincerely appreciative that you [Mr. Armstrong] had the vision and guidance to make Ambassador College what it is, and that I have the unique opportunity to be here. I work as a custodian in the Auditorium, yet the building never loses its beauty.

Julie Muenster (Pasadena, CA)

Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for the tremendous opportunities you have given us, the students of Ambassador College. I pray that we can use what we're learning and give even more where and how God wants. Keep up your tremendous work!

Renaë Bechtold (Pasadena, CA)

Being a student at Ambassador College, I have the privilege and opportunity of being closer to the Work than perhaps members feel in far-removed church areas. I am so very thankful for this opportunity to serve the Church, the Work and AICF.

As I daily walk about this campus, I am awed by it. I rejoice over it and thank God that you (Mr. Armstrong) have obeyed God and let Him work through and with you in providing this wonderful educational institution for us. It simply does not compare to any other.

Joyce Harrar (Pasadena, CA)

#### Readers Value Our Literature

I have really been blessed. I find that my eyes are beginning to see and my ears to hear. I must say that The PLAIN TRUTH and the booklets you've sent have been important in this. I now feel a hunger which I can't seem to satisfy. It is a hunger for more knowledge of my Father's wishes, and how I might find favor in His sight.

I would really appreciate it if you could get the booklet I have requested off to me quickly since my hunger is growing bigger. God bless you and all His children.

Curtis Beard (Rosharon, TX)

Thank you so very much for all your valuable literature! Truly, reading The PLAIN TRUTH magazine and other booklets provides answers to many questions in my mind, and gives me explanations for so many otherwise strange, unexplicable things happening in the world today.

Mr. Armstrong, I am a service member of the United States Army in Europe. My husband and I are both stationed here in the Federal Republic of Germany. In Germany we feel so much closer to world problems.

Receiving your literature once or twice a month means so much. It provides the whole picture and more! It not only tells what is happening, but gives the only valid causes and explanations--those found in the Bible!

Thank you again, Mr. Armstrong, for the blessings of knowledge which your literature provides!

Mrs. Edna Overkamp (A.P.O., NY)

I think the Work you are doing in getting the true Word to those in the world who want to hear and learn is very commendable. I can't thank God enough for you and the material that I receive. It has enlightened me so much. I can't put it down when I start reading--it's spellbinding!

Mrs. Esther Shields (Baltimore, MD)

Thank you so much for your Godly encouragement through your magazines and Bible lessons. I don't know of anyone who teaches God's truth as you people do. Without your literature and Bible studies, I couldn't understand the Holy Scriptures. God bless you all.

Russell L. Hudson (Niles, MI)

I want you to know that I can't wait for the booklets that I send for. When I receive them, I sit right down (no matter what I'm doing) and read them from cover to cover. The only disappointment I have when I've finished reading is that there wasn't enough of it. But I sure am inspired by everything you write.

Your books and magazines have helped me more than I can say. I have passed them along to my family and I know that they have helped them also.

Mrs. Madeline Hood (Livingston Manor, NY)

I would like to send a special word of thanks and many compliments in regard to the tremendous work you are doing! I find your literature excellent and most informative in light of world events. It is always a pleasure for me to sit down and read any of the articles by you and your staff.

Abuu Baatin (Jamaica, NY)

Your literature has opened my eyes to a lot of truths. Nowhere else can I find printed material as informative as yours. And if I could find it, I'm sure I'd pay a good-sized price for it.

I'm so glad you are offering your material according to what the Bible says. Therefore anyone, rich or poor, may receive it--you request no money. If I had \$100 to spare right now, I'm sure I'd want to send it along with this letter, even though you asked for nothing. I want to thank you for sending all your materials. May God richly bless you.

Mrs. Richard C. Smith (Roxboro, NC)

--JOE TKACH, MINISTERIAL SERVICES

FEDERAL COURT DECISION HELPS CHURCH CHILDREN

Corporate Counsel for the Church, Ralph K. Helge, reports that a Federal judge in Amarillo, Texas, has just declared unconstitutional a School Board policy that resulted in oppression of Church children for taking off school for the Feast of Tabernacles and other Holy Days.

In the case which Church Corporate Counsel caused to be filed and also served as co-counsel, the Federal judge has come down hard on the Amarillo, Texas Independent School District for refusing to let Worldwide Church of God children off from school to go to the Feast. The School Board had established a policy of allowing a maximum of two excused absences per school year for Church children for religious reasons. The children were given zeros for every unexcused day they were absent, were denied makeup work and the right to make up missed tests. Many received failing grades for the grading period and their overall grades were lowered for the whole year.

In ruling in favor of the Church and against the School Board, the court:

(1) Declared the School Board's excused absence policy to be unconstitutional and in violation of the free exercise of religion rights of the children under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

(2) Entered an injunction prohibiting the School Board from enforcing its unlawful policy.

(3) Ordered the School Board to go back and provide makeup work to the children for all tests and school work which was missed during the Feast and Holy Days last fall, and to raise their fall grades accordingly.

(4) Ordered the School Board to pay the attorneys' fees of the Church's attorneys and other costs of the suit.

Needless to say, we are extremely pleased with this favorable result and are hopeful that this decision will be a precedent for correcting or preventing similar problems in other scattered school districts across the country.

WORLDWIDE NEWS CIRCULATION POLICY CHANGE

The Worldwide News is sent free of charge to all current member heads of household. Newly baptized members are added to our lists automatically. The Worldwide News will no longer be sent to co-workers or to other non-members who have asked to be added to the WN mailing list. This circulation policy is effective beginning with the April 6, 1981 Worldwide News at Mr. Armstrong's request.

Church pastors are requested, therefore, to discontinue furnishing their church libraries with copies of the WN for general consumption. Also, prospective members should not be encouraged to subscribe to the paper. They will be automatically added to WN mailing lists upon our notification of their baptism. The Good News magazine, however, will continue to be made available to co-workers and prospective members.

--Dexter Faulkner

ON THE WORLD SCENE

POLAND: BACK FROM THE BRINK--WHY DID BREZHNEV BLINK? At the Czechoslovak Communist Party meeting yesterday in Prague, Soviet President Brezhnev tossed Poland an olive branch. In a conciliatory speech, Brezhnev gave Poland's beleaguered Communist party what some called a "second chance" to solve that nation's internal political crisis, without offering "fraternal help" from the Warsaw Pact armies. In addition, the high level "Soyuz 81" war games maneuvers conducted around Poland's borders have ended.

Is this just a lull before the storm? A minority of observers think so. They believe that Moscow has already secretly given up on the Polish party; that a massive 500,000 man invasion will soon sweep across Polish territory, enforcing worker discipline. Could be, but most observers feel that the Soviets have again truthfully displayed their extreme reluctance to move in. They fully realize just how costly an invasion would be.

The Polish crisis has resulted in an unusual display of harmony on the part of Washington and its Western European allies. For his part, President Reagan, from his hospital bed, dispatched a toughly-worded note to Brezhnev, making it abundantly clear to Moscow that Soviet military action in Poland would trigger massive Western reprisals, amounting to the toughest political, economic and diplomatic countermeasures against the Kremlin since World War II. The Soviets would be faced with a full array of sanctions "across the board, short of war," reports our Reuters news wire. Specifically, these countermeasures are said to include:

--A virtually total trade blockade against the Kremlin and any of its Warsaw Pact allies involved in military operations. Major projects such as a projected natural gas pipeline from Siberia to Western Europe would probably be halted.

--A suspension of arms negotiations, a freeze on almost all East-West political and other contacts, abandonment of the European Security Conference in Madrid and a concerted campaign to isolate Moscow internationally.

--Serious new efforts to strengthen NATO defenses in Europe and Western security efforts in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.

--The halting of U.S. financial and food aid for Poland, leaving the already hard-pressed Soviet Union to grapple with the country's steadily deepening economic crisis.

--The possibility of U.S. arms sales to China. This would be a major development directly affecting Moscow's security and the global balance of power.

Moscow knows that an invasion would probably result in the complete collapse of the Polish economy, already teetering on the brink. The Poles would simply stop working. "They can't put a soldier with a gun behind every Polish worker," remarked a Western diplomat. "There are too many Poles--35 million of them."

The Soviets are also concerned that Polish resistance to a Red Army move could trigger civil disturbances in the Soviet republics of Lithuania and the Ukraine, both of which have historic ties to Poland.

Thus, Moscow is confronted with one of its most serious and confusing dilemmas ever. Poland represents a gross contradiction in Communist terms --a situation in which the "government of the workers" (the communist Polish United Workers' Party) is being challenged by 10 millions of the country's workers (Solidarity). Even more absurd in Moscow's eyes is the fact that one-third of the Communist party members are also members of Solidarity.

Some Western diplomats in Moscow feel that the Soviets missed their best chance months ago to get the upper hand in Poland. The reform movement has since swept by them and now enjoys widespread support among Poland's intellectuals, industrial workers, farmers and church leaders. Intellectual dissidents such as those representing the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) denounce Marxist ideology in public. Moscow is frustrated because it has decreasing opportunities in which to communicate its message to the Polish people since the Polish communist party has lost almost complete control over Poland's newspapers.

Poland's situation is far different from what Moscow confronted in Czechoslovakia during the "Prague Spring" of 1968. The Czech reform movement (which called for "communism with a human face") was led by a reform-minded Communist party. The Czech people followed their new leaders, intoxicated by the increasingly liberalized political climate. Then, suddenly, Moscow slammed the door shut.

In Poland, almost the reverse is true. The reform movement there is essentially "grass roots" in nature, with the Polish people themselves putting the pressure on the reluctant party and government, forcing one concession after another. Poland's communist party retains the power--but has lost authority over the people to Solidarity.

Meanwhile, what influence does the Polish pope, John Paul II, have over events in his homeland? Little has been revealed directly. However, it is now believed that the Soviet Union came very close to intervening in Poland last December. According to one report, Mr. Brezhnev cast the deciding vote in a 7-6 Politburo decision not to send in the troops. Newsweek magazine, in its January 5, 1981 issue speculated that there may have been another reason for the Kremlin's caution during the earlier December crisis. It said, in its "Periscope" column of that date:

"Pope John Paul has quietly passed word that he would fly to Poland to be with his countrymen if the Soviets invade. He disclosed this in off-the-record audiences with at least two recent visitors, both of whom came away with the impression that the pope has made his intentions known to the Soviets. One of the visitors, a French diplomat, thinks the prospect of John Paul's presence could help account for the Kremlin's caution in the Polish situation so far."

A Vatican spokesman was quick to deny that the Pope had ever voiced such an intention.

Vatican pressure or not, the men in Moscow are undoubtedly thinking long and hard about the expected costs of direct intervention in the affairs of their socialist ally. Another indication of why they may not move at this time was given this morning: Intelligence reports reveal that Moscow has had to beef up its forces in Afghanistan to the tune of another 25,000 to 30,000 men.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau