

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



VOL. 4, NO. 42

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 8, 1982

NEWS FROM THE PASTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE

Update on Mr. Armstrong's Trip

Sunday, October 31, Mr. Armstrong departed Pasadena on another overseas trip. He was disappointed that he was unable to hear the fourth and final concert of Maestro Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic, undoubtedly the finest in the world. Prior scheduling would not allow this luxury, so at 9 a.m. the party entered the "first heaven" en route to Bermuda. On board with Mr. Armstrong were PLAIN TRUTH World News Editor Gene Hogberg and his wife Barbara, Personal Aide Aaron Dean and his wife Michelle, Captain Black, Ken Hopke and Jan Weiner.

In order to make the trip easier and still do as much as possible, the trip was broken into smaller time changes to allow for adjustment. After a five-and one-half hour flight and a four-hour time change, the group touched down on the beautiful 21 square mile island of Bermuda. Mr. Armstrong was greeted by Mr. Stan Bass, Regional Director of the Caribbean area, and Mr. Roland Sampson, the local minister, and driven to the Southampton Princess Hotel where the group stayed.

At lunchtime on Monday Mr. Bass came to Mr. Armstrong's suite and gave a slide presentation on God's Work in the Caribbean. Starting with Radio Americas and Radio Caraibes in St. Lucia, the growth of the Work was traced through the various baptizing tours of the '60s and the start of the Churches. Currently there are six local offices in the various islands, with the central office in Puerto Rico. One very noticeable fact in common with other regional reports is the rapid growth of the Church since Mr. Armstrong's return to Pasadena in 1981.

The first official meeting began at 2:30 p.m. with the U.S. Consul General to Bermuda, Mr. Max Friedersdorf. Mr. Hogberg and Mr. Dean accompanied Mr. Armstrong on a very pleasant 50-minute visit. Mr. Friedersdorf, appointed by the Reagan Administration, had just entertained the Chief of the Marine Corps, General Barrows. The general, we were told, had started his career in the 30's and had fought behind the lines in China in 1939. Discussing security problems, Mr. Armstrong explained that prophecy gives no indication that there will be a nuclear war between the U.S. and Russia, but rather between the U.S. and a united Europe.

The discussion included the vital importance of Bermuda to the security of the United States, the volatile situation in Spain and the Pope's scheduled visit there.

Mr. Friedersdorf asked about Mr. Armstrong's itinerary and the various projects of the Ambassador Foundation around the world. When asking about Mr. Armstrong's age, Mr. Friedersdorf was surprised to learn that Mr. Armstrong's birthday was the same as his father's.

Mr. Armstrong left in time to make his next scheduled meeting with the Governor of Bermuda, but found that the Governor had strained his back and had been rushed to the hospital just hours before. (Being a British Colony, the Governor is appointed by the Queen, although the day-to-day affairs are run by the Bermudian Government.) In his place, Mr. Armstrong met with Deputy Governor Brian Watkins. Mr. Armstrong asked about the educational system in Bermuda and found it patterned more after the British system. (Even as Mr. Armstrong's party had driven through the city, they had noticed the children in uniform returning from school.) When the subject turned to The PLAIN TRUTH, Mr. Watkins commented, "I know it, I've seen copies of it in connection with an article on the Pope's visit to England."

During the meeting, the ladies were taken on a tour of the British Government House. Surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers, this two-story building located on top of a hill is a mixture of Italian, French and Georgian architecture. The ladies entered by the 17th-century cannons and noticed a picture of Queen Elizabeth II where the tall corridors meet. They were escorted on the tour by Major Randal Butler, Aide de Camp of the Governor. The tour combined current beauty with historical information.

Mr. Armstrong's next stop was with Premier John Swan, head of the Bermudian government. Mr. Bass and Mr. Sampson were also invited to attend this meeting in the Premier's office.

It took only a few minutes with the Premier to see why he had been appointed to his position. From the conversation it could be seen that he had a good literary understanding of the Bible and practiced many biblical principles in his own life. Mr. Armstrong discussed his early life and conversion, and his wife's challenge on the test commandment--the Sabbath. He continued, telling of God's Plan for us to be in His Family as Gods. In talking of becoming perfect, Premier Swan asked how we could be any different, seeing the imperfection and fallibility in humans. The two-hour meeting ended with Premier Swan giving Mr. Armstrong an autographed book entitled Images of Bermuda, and asking Mr. Armstrong to sign his autograph book. Mr. Armstrong accepted an invitation to visit the Premier again whenever time would permit.

At 7:30 Monday evening, Mr. Armstrong gave a powerful message to nearly 300 PLAIN TRUTH readers at the Loews Bermuda Beach Hotel. He spoke plainly of the Bible, how other churches fail to teach what God says, and how man cannot understand His Word without God's Holy Spirit.

Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. the group departed Bermuda for Abidjan, capital of the Republic of the Ivory Coast. Because of the distance, the G-II stopped for fuel at the Cape Verde Islands, formerly a Portuguese colony. With another four-hour time change, the group touched down at 9:30 p.m. Abidjan time. This was strictly a rest stop to allow everyone to catch up. The weather cooperated with a beautiful sunny day for relaxation on Wednesday.

On Thursday, November fourth, we flew to Windhoek, South West Africa where the G-II refueled before going on to Johannesburg to continue Mr. Armstrong's Church visits.

Friday found Mr. Armstrong adjusting to Johannesburg's 6,000 foot elevation. The lack of oxygen did give our apostle some problems, but with God's

help he delivered two very powerful messages to the Churches over the weekend. The first was in Johannesburg where he addressed 1,246 members, some from as far away as Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia). Another 1,000 were hooked up by telephone. Sunday, Mr. Armstrong flew to Capetown and spoke to another 388 members there. The apostle outlined the purpose of the Church, our need to build perfect character, and ultimately our role as teachers and Gods.

Before departing South Africa, Mr. Armstrong addressed the ministry, covering their roles in teaching Church members now. He also gave an update on the current happenings in the Church.

(Editor's Note: The next PGR will continue to report on Mr. Armstrong's latest trip.)

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

November 5, 1982

The mail processing and banking offices are now up to date, so we have complete financial information for October. The increase for the year to date was 10.1% over 1981. This is a little more of an increase overall than the holy day offerings.

Even though we would like to have more for the departments, and especially for the Great Commission, this is not a bad increase, considering current economic conditions. The departments have been holding down expenses, so projections for the year indicate there will be an increase in reserves over last year.

We are trying hard to stay within the income God sends and also put some into reserves, as we believe we should try to increase our reserves above present levels.

Next week we begin the laborious process of preparing a budget for 1983. Your prayers for those involved in this process and for the overall prosperity of the Work are appreciated.

--Leroy Neff, Treasurer

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Recent Ordinations

Following is a list of men ordained, with Mr. Armstrong's approval, during the fall feast season this year:

To Local Elder

William Bentley
Bruno Leclerc
Norman Myers

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Montreal (French), Quebec, Canada
Denver, Colorado

To Preaching Elder

Robert Flores, Jr.
Dan White

San Antonio-Uvalde, Texas
Texarkana, Texas/Mena, Arkansas/
Shreveport, Louisiana

To Pastor

Jeff Barness	San Francisco-Oakland, California
Mel Dahlgren	Tacoma-Olympia, Washington
Richard Frankel	Washington, D.C.
Bruce Gore	Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas
Ron Howe	Pasadena (Aud. a.m.), California
Sam Kneller	Paris, France
Les McColm	Long Beach, California
Roy Page	Winnipeg, Alberta, Canada
Harold Rhodes	Austin-Waco, Texas
John Ritenbaugh	Columbia, South Carolina/Augusta, Georgia
Dick Thompson	Dayton, Ohio

Ministerial Transfers

Below is a list of transfers which took place in August and September, in addition to the transfers announced in the July 2nd PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

<u>Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Jeff Barness	Cincinnati (West), OH	San Francisco-Oakland, CA
Karl Beyersdorfer	Baton Rouge-Lafayette, LA	Cincinnati (West), OH
Alton Billingsley	Fresno-Visalia, CA	Baton Rouge-Lafayette, LA
Al Dennis	Long Beach, CA	Cincinnati (East), OH
Les McColm	Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo, CA	Long Beach, CA
Dennis Milner	Pasadena (Aud. a.m.), CA (Assistant)	San Francisco-Oakland, CA (Associate)
Victor Root	Berlin-Hamberg-Hannover, Germany	Pasadena (Aud. a.m.), CA (Associate)
Carlton Smith	Oakland, CA	Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo, CA
Glen White	Seattle, WA (Associate)	Fresno-Visalia, CA (Pastor)

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE UPDATE

(Pasadena Campus)

All is coming along very well with Ambassador College. We now have 505 full-time on-campus students, plus 60 married students and a few single students living off campus. We also have an additional 76 part-time students who live off campus. This makes a grand total of 641 students (both single and married) now attending Ambassador College.

We had intended to accept a number of students for enrollment at Ambassador in January, 1983. But we are losing so few students that it now looks as

though we will only be able to take in a very few for the coming semester. Since we are now being far more selective than ever before, and since the students now realize what a blessing it is to attend Ambassador College, we simply do not have many in College who aren't doing well. We are having the lowest drop-out rate in the history of the College. This is good, but in a way it is "bad" in that if fewer students drop out, then this means we can't take in as many new students. We would prefer, of course, never to have to drop any students.

Tuesday, in the Forum, Mr. Kevin Dean (Superintendent of Imperial School and Director of Y.O.U.) announced the names of 13 Ambassador College students who are being sent to participate as counselors and instructors in the S.E.P. programs in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. They will leave Pasadena around the 19th of December and will return about mid-January. The College Administration is arranging for them to make up any classwork or tests which they will miss as a result of taking part in the "International S.E.P. Opportunities." What a fantastic opportunity for these students! They represent nearly three percent of the entire student body.

I spoke to Mr. Armstrong over the phone Wednesday morning. He and his party had recently arrived in Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast in western Africa. He was fine, and was cheerfully looking forward to the rest of his trip to Africa and Europe. He had just come from visiting our office in Bermuda.

Our Feast Trip to Europe

After the Feast this year, my wife and I visited our European offices (except for our Dutch office) and also got to see a bit of Switzerland and Italy. We returned from the Feast a week after classes resumed here in Pasadena.

It was a decade ago since I last traveled to Europe. I was surprised to be able to drive all of the way from Amsterdam to Rome on modern super highways. Clearly, there has been great material progress in Europe in the ten years since my family moved back to the United States.

My wife and I had a very busy, but also enjoyable Feast of Tabernacles with the British, German and French brethren. We arrived in London the day before Atonement, and were, therefore, able to observe that holy day with some of the British Churches which met at Hatfield, England. Also, we were privileged to meet many hundreds of people whom I had known during my 15 years in Britain.

We were privileged to visit all three of the British Feast sites. I spoke twice at the site in Southport (near Liverpool, England), then spoke once in Tenby (south Wales) and once at the Eastbourne, England site. Overall, more than 3,000 brethren met at these three sites. It was both a joy and a privilege for my wife and me to be able to meet so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Also, it was very enjoyable having the opportunity to meet nearly all of the British ministers and their wives, and on several occasions having the opportunity to fellowship and feast with them.

This was also true of our visits to both West Germany and France. We visited the German Feast site at Bonndorf where I was privileged to speak to the brethren on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. And we got to attend

a dance where Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hennig were present, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Frank Schnee and the other ministers and their wives.

Then, on the Last Great Day, my wife and I had the opportunity to fellowship with our French brethren at Praz-sur-Arly. We had previously concluded that the German Feast site at Bonndorf, located in the beautiful Black Forest of Germany, was the most beautiful Feast site we had ever seen. But when we visited Praz, we had to admit that the French Feast site, located in the scenic French Alps, was even more beautiful. On the Last Great Day and on the following day, we had very fine weather--sunny, with beautiful clouds piled high in the sky. And, always looming in the background was the spectacularly beautiful Mont Blanc--the highest mountain in Europe! We took what we hope will be some beautiful pictures of this gorgeous scenery.

My wife and I much appreciated the love and hospitality which we received from God's ministers and from His people wherever we went. It would be impossible to mention all the ministers by name, but the list would certainly include (in England), Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brown, Mr. Francis Bergin and the other ministers and wives who made our visit to the British Feast sites so enjoyable.

Then, while in Bonndorf, Mr. and Mrs. Schnee and the other ministers made us quite welcome. Also, we greatly appreciated having Mr. and Mrs. Wolfgang Thompson meet us at the airport in Zurich and drive us to Bonndorf, then back to Zurich so we could catch our plane for Geneva.

We were also received very hospitably by the French ministers and their wives--Mr. and Mrs. Jean Carion, Mr. and Mrs. Olivier Carion, Mr. and Mrs. Donat Picard (visiting from Canada), Mr. and Mrs. James Muir, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Andrist and the other ministers.

After the Feast, we were able to visit our office in Geneva where we were very hospitably received by Mr. and Mrs. Andrist and the staff of the Geneva office. Then, on the weekly Sabbath following the Feast, I was invited to speak to the German brethren from the Bonn-Dusseldorf area. That Sabbath evening, all of the German-speaking ministers, their wives and my wife and I were invited to Mr. Frank Schnee's home for an enjoyable evening of fellowship and a lovely dinner which Mrs. Schnee had prepared.

It was very inspiring and encouraging for my wife and me to visit with the British, French and German brethren during the Feast. And it was especially inspiring for me to hear the ministers all speaking the same thing--all preaching good, sound, meaty sermons and sermonettes.

Our final continental stop, before returning to the U.S., was Paris. While in Paris, we had the privilege of seeing our Church meeting hall/office, and were also happy to have the opportunity to visit with and have dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kneller. I had known Mr. Kneller when he was a student in Bricket Wood, and it was good to see him and Mr. James Muir, as well as many other ministers in Europe whom I had first known as students in the College in England years ago. (In fact, over half of all the men who attended Ambassador College in England are now serving in the ministry.)

Again, I wish to express deep appreciation to Messrs. Frank Brown, Frank Schnee and Dibar Apartian for the privilege of worshipping with the British, German and French brethren during the recent Feast of Tabernacles.

It was certainly the most interesting and inspiring Feast my wife and I had observed in many, many years!

We at Headquarters pray for all of you ministers and your wives daily, and are always encouraged to know that you continue to remember God's apostle and all of us at Pasadena in your prayers.

--Raymond F. McNair, Deputy Chancellor

MAIL PROCESSING CENTER UPDATE

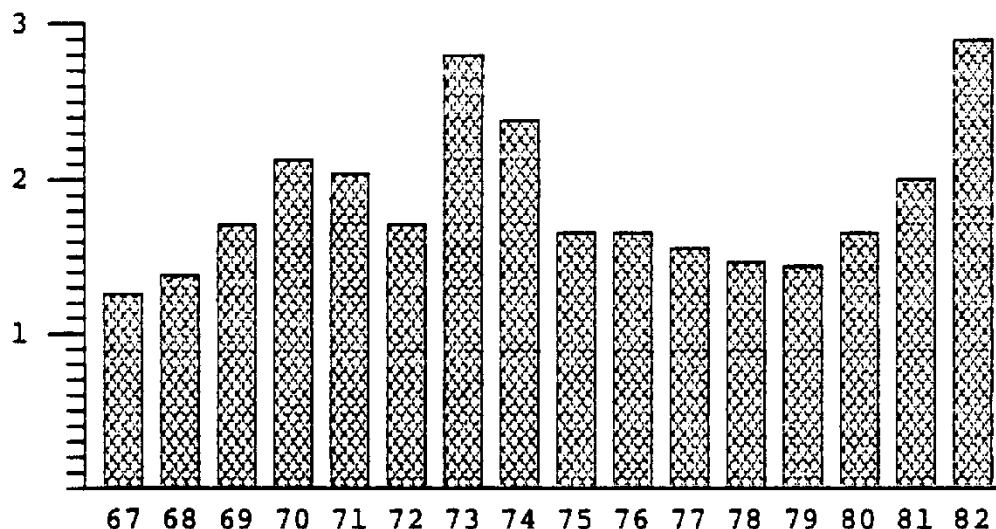
Mail Received Tops 3,000,000 Pieces as Record Pace Continues!

The total count for mail received at Pasadena and Tucson stood at 3,016,443 as of Friday, October 29. This is the highest year-to-date total in the history of the Work, eclipsing the previous year-to-date record (set in 1973) by some 123,000 pieces. The following graph shows the amount of mail received through the month of October for every year since 1967.

U.S. MAIL RECEIVED PER YEAR

FIRST TEN MONTHS OF EACH YEAR SINCE 1967

MILLIONS



Of the three million pieces received, about one-fifth (610,000) was from members and coworkers; another fifth represented PLAIN TRUTH renewals. Approximately 517,000 pieces of "media" mail were also received (responses from radio, TV, PLAIN TRUTH, GOOD NEWS, CORRESPONDENCE COURSE and news-stands).

In addition to the mail received, 384,000 calls for literature were also taken over the WATS lines.

The projected responses to Mr. Armstrong's semiannual letter and several large PLAIN TRUTH renewals (now being mailed out) are expected to make 1982 the all-time record year for incoming mail.

"The Best Feast Ever!"

Upon returning home from this year's Feast of Tabernacles, members have shared their impressions of another "best Feast ever." Brethren were encouraged and inspired to rededicate themselves to serving God and His Work in preparation for the coming world tomorrow, as the following comments show.

What a great spiritual Feast we received again this year in Dayton, Ohio! It was so wonderful seeing you (Mr. Armstrong) and singing to our great God together. We thank the Eternal for calling us and helping us daily through His Spirit to continue on. As you always say, we could never do it on our own strength, but our Saviour does indeed help us....We pray that our Feast attitudes will continue all through the year. God had indeed blessed us and we pray He will soon come to bless all people.

G. & M.G. (Lockbourne, OH)

I want to say thanks to you (Mr. Armstrong) and all the ministers and people who served at the Pasadena Feast site. The sermons and sermonettes were fantastic. So many wonderful things happened that I don't know where to start.

The campus is absolutely beautiful, and to be in the midst of that beauty and quality during the Feast was awe-inspiring. The family dance was an event we will always remember--the quality and unity made it a happy event. Particularly rewarding was participating in the festival choir for my wife and the WATS line for me. I will never forget the experience of being the first contact (after Mr. Armstrong) from the Work for those people calling in.

Also, the two films were excellent--especially "Behind the Work." I could go on, but thank you for all this and more. This Feast has been a reawakening for us. Thank you all for your part in making this a terrific Feast!

Mr. & Mrs. S.K. (Idaho Falls, ID)

A few days ago we arrived home from a most wonderful trip and Feast. We are still feasting on all the notes we took, and thinking about your sermon to all of us worldwide, and the Ambassador presentation. How inspiring it all was. All those we talked with expressed the need to really follow up and get their lives in order. We look forward to the world tomorrow when we can lead all nations into God's truth, even as you, through God, have led us to His truth.

Mr. & Mrs. G.Y. (Salem, OR)

We just arrived home after observing the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day in Squaw Valley, California. The spiritual nourishment we received was outstanding and we enjoyed this Feast as never before. We appreciated your sermons on the first day of the Feast and Last Great Day and thank God for inspiring and encouraging you to teach us more about His way and government.

R.A. (Salinas, CA)

Thank you for letting God use you in leading His end-time Work and for the powerful and inspiring messages during the Feast. This was the best Feast ever. I attended the Feast at Mt. Pocono and it was beautiful there. We had fantastic weather and the ministers were inspired. God truly blessed us--there are not even words on my lips or in my mind at the moment to describe it. I can only say it was beautiful. The cooperation and unity among the brethren was also at a peak....I hope and think God was pleased. Hopefully, He will continue to bless us and help us to help you finish the Work and push forward toward His coming Kingdom.

J.R. (Rochester, PA)

My sincerest thanks to you (Mr. Armstrong) and those who assisted you in producing the beautiful Feast edition of The GOOD NEWS with the timely articles of how to rejoice before the Eternal.

This Feast of Tabernacles (in Tucson) was truly the best I've ever attended, and I've attended all but two since my first one in Big Sandy in 1956. The ministers fed us with strong meat. Even my great-grandchildren (ages 10, 14 and 16) understood and wanted to obey the instructions that were given so forcefully and plainly. The beautiful BIBLE STORY book really put the icing on the cake.

Truly, God's way is to give and you are a living example of it. You give so much to help us understand how to grow spiritually. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being a shining example of God's way of life.

C.H. (Aurora, CO)

This truly has been the greatest Feast ever for our family. My wife and I saw the two most inspiring films of our lives--the Feast show put on by Ambassador College and the film, "Behind the Work." We want to thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for giving us the opportunity to see these two wonderful films. They revealed just how magnificent the world tomorrow will be--beautiful, clean, wholesome and filled with Godly, righteous character. And, even more inspiring, they showed the part we as members have in this Church. We were taught by those films. Soon we ourselves will be teaching others! What a wonderful, inspiring and meaningful Feast it has been!

G.P. (Rapid City, SD)

I just had to write and tell you that this year's Feast of Tabernacles was the most outstanding and rewarding I have ever attended. God's blessings and Spirit were truly evident throughout the Feast. Can you imagine 70 degree temperatures for eight days at Mt. Pocono, with rain only during the night or early morning?

During this Feast, I felt God was directly speaking to His Church through His ministry, telling us we have to separate ourselves from this world because we are a holy and chosen people. We must really start doing things God's way, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of this dying world.

Mrs. J.H. (Browns Mills, NJ)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENEBEAUTIFUL BERMUDA: LITTLE-KNOWN SEAGATE FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE

DATELINE: JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (November 5, 1982): Yesterday, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and his party arrived in this bustling African metropolis after a six-hour flight from Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast. We refueled along the way at Windhoek, South West Africa (Namibia).

Abidjan was a rest stop--and a very interesting one at that--en route to Mr. Armstrong's major destinations in Africa, Greece and Spain. The Ivory Coast is perhaps Black Africa's most successful nation. Its huge outpouring of coffee (world's third largest producer) generates considerable national income. Abidjan's skyline is indeed quite impressive as is the layout of the city itself, weaving its way around a series of coastal lagoons.

A Pearl in the Atlantic

Abidjan was not our first stop, however. The first day and a half were spent on Britain's tiny Atlantic island colony of Bermuda, situated 570 nautical miles off America's East Coast. To those of us in Mr. Armstrong's party, Bermuda was a most pleasant and beautiful surprise.

The tiny archipelago, which can be driven by car from end to end in only an hour and a half, is a most idyllic spot. One readily sees why it is such a favorite destination for tourists, who come by the thousands during the peak April-October holiday season, mainly aboard cruise ships from New York City. Verdant, subtropical Bermuda is too far north to be considered part of the Caribbean, but it is warmed, nevertheless, by the soothing Gulf Stream.

Bermuda's economy is strong, with unemployment virtually nil. Tourism directly accounts for 40 percent of the total employment, with the operation of "exempt companies" (foreign operating, locally-registered firms) providing the second largest source of employment. Bermuda authorities are also careful to maintain the island as what they call a "quality tourist destination." As a result of these policies, Bermudians enjoy an income said to be one of the ten highest in the world.

Mr. Armstrong Well Known

Bermuda is an impressive "outpost" for God's Work as well. As a result of being on radio and television for many years, Mr. Armstrong is a well-known figure to most Bermudians. The ratio of Church members and PLAIN TRUTH readers to the total population is very likely the highest in the entire Work. (Approximately 58,000 people occupy Bermuda's tiny 21 square miles, one of the highest densities in the world.)

Mr. Armstrong's arrival was reported on the local news, along with an announcement of his Monday evening, November 1, PLAIN TRUTH readers lecture. Approximately 270 readers responded. A little over half of them were our members.

Mr. Armstrong was also interviewed by a woman reporter for the daily newspaper, the ROYAL GAZETTE.

Talk With Premier

Thanks to advance preparation by Mr. Stan Bass, director of God's Work in the Caribbean area (Bermuda is administered out of the Puerto Rican office), the local minister in Bermuda, Mr. Roland Sampson, plus a solid support team of local members, a series of high-level meetings were arranged for Mr. Armstrong. As a result, on Monday afternoon we met the Deputy Governor of Bermuda (representing the British Crown), the Premier (Bermuda has been self-governing since 1620, the longest of any Commonwealth country outside of the British Isles) and the Consul General of the United States.

The Governor, Sir Richard Posnett, had unfortunately injured his back that morning playing a round of golf. The alternative meeting with the Deputy Governor was pleasant, but brief.

The meeting with the Premier, Mr. John Swan, was certainly the highlight of the day. Mr. Bass and Mr. Sampson had the opportunity to accompany Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Aaron Dean and me for the two-hour private chat.

The Premier, tall, vigorous and younger looking than his 46 years, has been a most successful businessman in the island, specializing in real estate and investments. He made his first million dollars before the age of 30.

The conversation between Mr. Armstrong and the Premier was a lively one throughout, with Mr. Swan asking many knowledgeable questions, reflecting an obvious concern on his part with matters of Christian thought and morality. (He graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1960.)

At the conclusion, Mr. Swan thanked Mr. Armstrong for stopping off in Bermuda. He remarked that if Mr. Armstrong stayed any longer he might have to become one of his followers or disciples. Mr. Armstrong smilingly replied that he shouldn't be like the man who said that "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (King Agrippa's response to the Apostle Paul, as recorded in Acts 26:28).

It was quite a witness, one in which Mr. Armstrong, like Paul, did "speak forth the words of truth and soberness" (verse 25).

Value to Britain and America

There is another side to Bermuda however, one far removed from its idyllic setting. We experienced this as well. Throughout a large portion of its history Bermuda, a little-recognized seagate, has been of unique strategic value to the descendants of Israel. Bermuda, by the way, is named after Juan Bermudez, the Spaniard who first saw the islands, but did not land on them. The Spanish were not interested in Bermuda, considering its reef-strewn waters only a navigational hazard to be avoided by their ships going home after looting the gold from the new world. They called the region "La Isla de Demonios"--Island of the Devils.

Bermuda had, ever since the American Revolution, served as one of Britain's new world military outposts, with a large Royal Navy dockyard. Bermuda was even at one time called the "Gilbraltar of the West."

The onset of World War II however, changed the strategic picture, as the nearby United States realized the military importance of Bermuda. In 1941,

the U.S. began construction of a naval air station under a 99-year lease. Other military facilities were constructed as well. In this manner the U.S. was better equipped to keep open the vital Atlantic shipping lanes between America and war-ravaged Europe.

And it was at Bermuda that the secret German code of World War II was broken. (Mr. Armstrong has spoken quite a lot about this code lately, drawing a parallel to the Bible being written in code form as a message from God to those whose minds are opened by the Holy Spirit.) I believe the account of this breakthrough is recorded in the book A Man Called Intrepid.

Keeps Eye on Russian Subs

Since the war, Bermuda has played perhaps an even more critical role, this time in the context of the East/West nuclear standoff. This was explained to us by Mr. Max Friedersdorf, U.S. Consul General, in his office in Hamilton, Bermuda's tiny (population 2,000) capital. (Mr. Friedersdorf, incidentally, served on the White House staff under Presidents Nixon and Ford and knows President Reagan well.)

Mr. Friedersdorf pointed out how that P-3 Orion aircraft, stationed at the U.S. Naval Air Station, fly in shifts over the Atlantic, ranging eastward from Bermuda, performing continuous anti-submarine surveillance, detecting the movements of Soviet undersea craft. At another military base in the archipelago, computers monitor reports filtering back from a network of sensing devices scattered over the ocean floor between Bermuda and the U.S. mainland. (In much the same manner, the Swedes detect Soviet submarines in their coastal waters.)

Mr. Friedersdorf proceeded to explain just how serious this deadly cat and mouse game really is. There is an area in the Atlantic Ocean where at any given time, all the time, sit three or four Soviet nuclear-powered submarines. Each of these submarines sneaks down from Leningrad, goes on duty, and then returns, all the while below surface in a month-long tour of duty.

Each submarine holds 16 underwater Polaris-type missiles armed with three atomic warheads apiece. Each warhead is targeted on a major American East Coast city, and each warhead--again three to a missile--is far more powerful than either of the two weapons which applied the coup de grace to Japan in 1945. And the traveling time of these missiles would be less than 15 minutes once launched.

As Mr. Friedersdorf added, the American public has no real comprehension of such activity currently going on, neither is it of similar U.S. submarine patrols with their warheads targeted on Soviet cities.

Independence: What Then?

The friendly and prosperous people of Bermuda certainly did not choose to be caught up in the middle of the world's most deadly power struggle. Nevertheless, such is the reality beneath the apparently calm, multi-hued waters offshore. Bermudians face another reality, one that bears heavily on the first. Inevitably it seems, this self-governing island will go independent.

Why? some would ask. Why give up a life of tranquility--and no income tax. (A 30 percent duty on imports leads to a rather high cost of living, but still....)

It just seems that to be independent is the thing to do. There is mounting pressure to head in this direction. Even the ruling United Bermuda Party, no enthusiastic supporter of the idea, now says it will not stand in the way. Neither, of course, will Britain which always allows its colonies to choose their own political course.

What position would the government of an independent Bermuda take regarding its contribution toward Western defense?

For a starter, mark this well. The Soviets would love to change the status quo. It is unlikely that an independent Bermuda, because of its well-distributed prosperity, could succumb to extreme leftism a la Cuba. But the Soviets could pressure the tiny country to sever the defense links with the U.S. in order to give them a freer hand in the Atlantic. There would be calls for Bermuda to be "neutral" or in the current parlance, to go "nuclearfree."

America would be exposed to even greater peril.

As Bermuda faces its uncertain future, we are reminded of the tiny seagate's motto: Qua fata ferunt--whither the fates lead us.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau