

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

International News

Report From Bonn, West Germany In this month's report, we would like to give an overview of the work God is doing in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and Southwest Germany. This year we have planned the largest PLAIN TRUTH advertising campaign in the history of God's Work in this area.

This spring, flyers will be placed in two Swiss magazines, WIR ELTERN and SCHWEIZER BEOBACHTER, with a total circulation of 500,000 for both magazines. Then in the fall, we are planning to place flyers in four different Swiss newspapers, which altogether have a total circulation of 564,000. Based on past response, we expect an additional 26,600 new subscribers from Switzerland by the end of 1983.

In 1980, Mr. Tom Lapacka and his family were assigned to the German-speaking area of God's Work in Switzerland. Mr. Lapacka is the pastor of the local Churches in Zurich and Basel, Switzerland and Stuttgart, West Germany.

Services are conducted in Basel and Zurich one week, and Stuttgart the next. Services in Basel begin at 10:00 a.m., after which Mr. Lapacka drives an hour to Zurich for the 3:00 p.m. service. The next week services are conducted in Stuttgart at 2:30 p.m. Stuttgart is located about 240 kilometers (two and one-half to three hour drive) north of Zurich, where Mr. Lapacka and his family reside.

The fact that the Lapackas reside in Switzerland is a miracle in itself. Since 1976 we have been trying to move a representative to the German-speaking area of Switzerland to pastor the churches as well as represent the Work's interests there. Switzerland allows residence to roughly only 3,000 foreigners per year (this does not include temporary guest workers) and has very stringent entrance laws. After assistance from the Geneva office, we made a residence application and went through 13 months of red tape, a lot of legal correspondence and denials at two levels. Finally, approval was granted for the Lapackas to move into Switzerland in April of 1982.

Mr. Lapacka also conducts monthly Bible studies in Bern, has a Spokesman Club in Stuttgart, a graduate club in Switzerland, and is the festival coordinator for the Feast of Tabernacles in Bonndorf, West Germany.

The total incoming mail for this month showed a 15% decrease from February, 1982. This is due to the fact that our main nationwide advertising campaign for 1983 has not yet started. However, we did place 83,000 "leftover" flyers from previous printings in a local south German newspaper, the SUD-KURIER on February 23. In February we received 1,351 responses from this insert. We added a total of 2,550 new subscribers this month. Solicited mail increased 19% and donation mail increased 11%. This was reflected in a

47.4% increase in income for the month to date and a 49.4% increase for the year to date.

From New Zealand Jesus Christ is blessing His Work in this part of the world with very fine increases in income this year. January's income was up by 28% and February's by 23.4%, making the year-to-date figure 25.2%. Considering New Zealand's beleaguered economy--with a freeze on wages now in force--and the poverty of the small, storm-battered Pacific Islands, increases of this magnitude show that God is certainly supporting and sustaining those who are seeking to do His Work.

Another very encouraging factor so far this year has been a remarkable increase in visit requests. In January, new visits were up by 100%, and February saw 275% more visits than last February!

Just under 5,000 items of mail were received during February. Incoming mail is down by 27% so far this year, but is expected to rally during March as a large renewal mailing has just been sent out.

Newsstand copies of The PLAIN TRUTH are bringing increasing numbers of responses. We are now distributing 45,000 newsstand PLAIN TRUTHs per month and receiving around 500 responses monthly. "The World Tomorrow" broadcast has now been on four radio stations in New Zealand for the past five months, and each month brings in more responses than the month before.

Spanish Department Update La PURA VERDAD subscription list stood at 171,501 as of late February, a decline of 7.2% from January, and 12% from the end of 1982. At this time very little subscription promotion is being undertaken in order to level off the total circulation to 150,000 by the June issue. Nevertheless, PV circulation currently stands at 55% more than the same time last year. Through the first two months of 1983 only 8,544 new subscribers have been added, a 12.3% drop from the same period last year.

As of late February there were 10,359 PV subscribers in Spain, the all-time high for that nation and 157% more than a year ago! Of the worldwide total of 8,544 new subscribers added in 1983, some 24% of those are from Spain. These new subscribers are coming mostly from the efforts of five or six scattered brethren who are distributing cards in Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga, Granada, and several small cities. These members have informed us that they could distribute two or three times more cards, but again, strict budgetary constraints discourage expanding the effort. It is hoped that by mid-year finances will allow us to expand card distribution in Spain.

A baptized member residing in Guatemala City was killed near the provincial capital of Huehuetenango February 9. Please continue to pray that God's people in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua will be protected from the hardships in that area.

Appreciation for the Second Ministerial Refreshing Program

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Little did we realize that returning to Pasadena for the Refreshing Program could do so much for us. Well, it did! And my wife and I wish to express to you and those who work with you our deepest gratitude and love.

We know it was a privilege and honor for us to be invited for the Program, to be able to meet other ministers and their wives, to visit with friends, to learn from the men whom God is using at Headquarters and to once again see and hear God's only apostle today, Mr. Herbert Armstrong.

That the Refreshing Program is an invaluable experience for the ministry is unquestionable. We have been refueled, rejuvenated, restrengthened, reenergized and profoundly inspired to make full proof of our ministry.

Please reassure Mr. Armstrong that we are fervently praying for him and God's Work. Though separated by much distance, we intend always to point all those in our charge to Headquarters for guidance and direction in order to maintain the unity of faith and bond of love. We are praying for all of you. Maintain the good work and THANKS for everything.

Lincoln and Elizabeth Jailal

Dear Mr. Tkach:

We thank you for being allowed to attend the Ministerial Refreshing Program. It was our first time. We were so happy to be on the beautiful campus of God's College!

The Refreshing Program was a success and we won't forget what has been given to us during those three weeks, both spiritually and physically. We had heard about the campus, but now we have seen it and lived on it, and we know it really was a privilege.

Thank you again, Mr. Tkach, for all you have done for us. Now we can better pray for all of you at Headquarters.

Gerard and Bernadette Claude

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Thank you and all involved in the second Ministerial Refreshing Program. It was even better than the first. I hope this program can be continued. It is a tremendous help in unifying the ministry and thus the Church. It has helped me once again to re-evaluate and refocus priorities. Mary and I also enjoyed the camaraderie, fellowship and soaking up the "Headquarters atmosphere."

Bob and Mary Jones

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Again I thank Mr. Armstrong, you and others for the second opportunity to join comrades of God's Work in a "feast of refreshing."

My wife and I enjoyed the fine accommodations, the especially good dinners hosted by you and others, the fine food from Mr. Green's kitchen, the beautiful surroundings of campus and students and especially the class sessions (which have already been useful in sermons and Bible studies).

It is particularly gratifying to be able to see and have some time with "old" friends from the field and from Headquarters, as well as make "new" friends in the same period.

Esprit de corps is evident and growing. We look forward to the next opportunity with much anticipation. Our only disappointment (selfish as it is) was not being able to see and hear from Mr. Armstrong in person.

Please convey our deep love and affection to Mr. Armstrong. We pray for him, you and others at Headquarters always.

David and Rosaphine Stone

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Greetings from Paris. This is a little note to thank you and the team in Pasadena for the very refreshing time we just spent there. With all the French ministry in together as well as Gerry Heldt (brother-in-law), it certainly was a jam-packed session.

What we really appreciated were the different presentations by the men. Yours on counseling I found particularly helpful and I've already made some changes in my approach. Mr. Petty's on sportsmanship was also very good, not to mention all the others.

We especially enjoyed staying over the extra weekend and attending the Sophomore Ball as well as hearing from Mr. Armstrong. He talked about the "new civilization" we're going to inaugurate and what struck me throughout the session was how many fields we're already in the forefront and how outsiders recognize this. Certainly we are on the right track and going in the right direction.

Sam and Marilyn Kneller

Comments From Monthly Church Reports

SPOKANE, WA--ROGER V. FOSTER: The quality of new prospective members seems to be much greater than at any time in over ten years--a far higher percentage are sincere and teachable as a whole. However, they are not well-grounded in knowledge. I hope we can get the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE into the hands of interested new people just as soon as possible.

TACOMA, WA--MELVIN J. DAHLGREN: Prospective member activity continues to be phenomenal. World conditions and Mr. Armstrong's telecasts are waking many up. Comments are too numerous to count expressing the effectiveness of the telecasts. This has been the busiest month of my entire ministry of thirteen years. More requests, problems, calls and baptisms than in any other month. There seems to be an intense pressure being exerted by Satan on everyone, creating a real spiritual mental battle.

ST. JOSEPH, MO/TOPEKA, KS--JAMES WELLS: The brethren here have been very inspired to see new prospective members coming to Church. They are so full of enthusiasm about God's truth. We've had some fine couples attend recently who commented on the

dedication and friendliness of the brethren in God's Church (which they didn't find in their previous church affiliations).

GENEVA, AL/FT. WALTON BEACH, FL--DON WATERHOUSE: There is a very encouraging upturn in the numbers of prospective members. Among these is a much higher percentage who are very interested and some have begun weekly Sabbath attendance.

ROCKFORD, IL--GREG JOHNSON: Good prospective member activity continues. The telecast is having a good impact, as is The PLAIN TRUTH newsstand program. Some of the brethren have employment problems, but most are doing well.

ROANOKE, VA--ROBERT PERSKY: Many prospective members are asking for baptism. The signs of the times along with strong sermons from Mr. Armstrong are causing slow-moving prospective members to repent. Attitudes, both good and bad, are surfacing as Passover approaches. A number of people outside of the Church have been healed after being prayed for by the Church--some being called "miracles" by the doctors.

CLEVELAND (EAST), OH--GUY L. ENGELBART: I am very pleased to report that we had seven baptisms this past month. This is the highest number of baptisms for a single month for several years in this area. Even though we are suffering through an economic depression in this area, with many members having to leave the area to find work elsewhere, God has certainly blessed us with a substantial number of new people coming into the Church. With the new people coming in, our attendance has remained steady.

EVANSVILLE, IN--C. FRED BAILEY: Attitudes are positive and supportive. Mr. Armstrong's activities and health are a big concern as people respond to his requests for fervent prayer. Some long-time unemployed members have resumed work, while those in the building trade have little to do.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK--ARNOLD CLAUSON: Oklahoma City continues to show positive signs of growth. Some who have for years "laid back" are beginning to get on fire again, realizing the value of their calling. The Church continues to grow and seems to be providing a warmer environment for new people who are coming along.

BATON ROUGE, LA--ALTON B. BILLINGSLEY: Members are continuing to be enthusiastic about the approaching end time. Their involvement and Bible study questions reflect this. Mr. Armstrong's taped sermons have added greatly to the unity, harmony and zeal here.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSING

Major Trends Point Upward as Work Forges Ahead in 1983

With the first two months of 1983 behind us, we are happy to report that God's Work continues to zoom ahead this year! The following statistics illustrate the solid, steady growth we are experiencing.

- Over ten million pieces of mail were sent out in the U.S. in January and February, including 4.1 million PLAIN TRUTHs. This exceeds last year's count for the same period by 18% and is a new all-time record.
- Interest in the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE remains high. So far this year, 32,356 new students have been added--a record number for a two-month period. Nearly half of the new students enrolled by returning booklet cards which offer the course. Another third came from similar cards in The PLAIN TRUTH.
- The co-worker picture "brightened" in two ways. First, 4,921 new co-workers were added to the list, the highest January-February count since 1978. Also, the number of contributors dropped from co-worker status (this occurs when they have not donated in 12 months) has been the lowest in four years.

If present trends continue, we can look forward to another "bumper crop" for the Work in 1983!

Returning Members Appreciate God's Way of Life

This week we are featuring letters from some members who left God's Church and have later come back. They mention some of the sorrow they experienced while away from the Church and share their gratitude for God's forgiveness and mercy. Thankful to have returned, they realize that only obedience to God's laws results in lasting happiness. Following are some of the comments received.

Earlier this year I wasn't feeling well physically and was under much stress from working far from home. I didn't have much time for God, my family or myself. I became spiritually weak, stopped tithing and didn't attend Church services regularly. I became unhappy and confused.

I have now started attending again and am I happy! I very much missed the love and support of my brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to be in God's Kingdom and I want Him to use me if He can. Our God is wonderful, faithful, and full of mercy.

(Oregon)

I am sending in my tithe again. Yes, again. I was an active member for one and one-half years and had paid tithes even before I knew where the local church was. But due to spiritual weaknesses, I left the Church a number of years ago. A lot has happened to me since then--much of it bad. I have learned some hard lessons and I thank God that He is showing me my mistakes. I am sorry that I have stolen from God and kept the tithes and offerings for myself.

At this time I am being counseled by the local minister. I just can't begin to tell you how much he has helped me in just two sessions (there are more to come). God is merciful, and He has brought me back to square one.

(Illinois)

I have been blessed so much within the last two weeks since I turned my life over to God. I've been positive and happy for the first time since I quit attending Church in 1971. My life had followed dead-end roads that took me nowhere.... But thanks to Almighty God who cares about me, I'm back on the right track, the ONLY road to true and lasting happiness and eternal life.

(Arizona)

About two years ago my husband stopped going to services and didn't have a very good attitude. Yet, God has looked out for him those long, hard years. I prayed and prayed, and now he is coming to services again and is stronger than before. His attitude is good, and he's so nice to live with. He's the best husband anyone could want. What a present from God! I can't really find the right words to tell you how good I feel about God's mercy.

(Maine)

My husband and I came into the Church in 1968. My husband stayed in about two years. I stayed in for five years and left. I was out for seven years and they were the most unhappy years of my life. God allowed us both to come back in 1979. He truly is merciful....

I hope that when Christ returns, my husband and I will be able to receive a reward and work hand in hand to accomplish God's will on this earth.

(Virginia)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center