

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

We in the Auditorium PM congregation were privileged to hear from Mr. Gerald Waterhouse last Sabbath, March 9. He has just completed his eighth world tour, and will begin his ninth in early April. His message about the new world government that God is preparing through His Church, soon to be established at the return of Jesus Christ, was most inspiring and encouraging! Mr. Waterhouse pointed out the need for all of us to recognize and respond to the government of God in our lives, from God the Father through Jesus Christ, down through Mr. Armstrong and the rest of the ministry, and finally in our families. The Auditorium AM and Imperial AM congregations will hear Mr. Waterhouse this coming Sabbath, March 16.

Regarding the Night to Be Much Observed, some ministers have been under the impression that unbaptized mates of members should not attend this occasion with other members. This is not the case! Nonmember mates should be made to feel welcome to attend. Of course, conduct and conversation on this evening should be in accordance with the nature of the observance, as discussed in last week's PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

On another subject, we are still experiencing occasional problems regarding the reinstatement of disfellowshipped persons. In each of these cases, most problems could have been avoided if the minister who reinstated the individual had contacted the minister who put the person out PRIOR to his reinstatement!

This should be a routine procedure before reinstating any disfellowshipped person. If the minister who disfellowshipped the individual is still in the ministry, always check with him before reinstating. (U.S. ministers can find out who disfellowshipped a person by calling Cledice Decker at the Mail Processing Center in Pasadena. International ministers should check with their Regional Office if the minister who did the disfellowshipping is not available.) Also, the other elders in your area may know the circumstances if the former pastor cannot be consulted.

Sometimes there are factors involved you need to be aware of to make the proper decision. As Mr. Armstrong continually stresses, there must be PERFORMANCE--real repentance--on the part of the individual before he is reinstated! How can we determine whether that is true if we have not taken the time to gather all the facts?

Reinstatement should not be taken lightly. It is a serious responsibility to determine whether there really are fruits of repentance, and to be sure we are not doing the individual a gross disservice by reinstating him before he is ready.

We are currently finalizing Feast of Tabernacles ministerial assignments. I have been able to go over most of these with Mr. Armstrong already. U.S. ministers who have requested transfers should have received their confirmations by now. We are looking forward to a fine Passover season and beyond that to a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles!

**** TO BE ANNOUNCED IN ALL U.S. AND CANADIAN CHURCHES ****

Certain Festival Sites Filled to Capacity

The Caribbean regional office has asked us to announce that the festival sites in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, and Nassau, Bahamas have reached capacity and no more applications can be accepted. If you have recently applied to one of these sites, you will be notified of your transfer status by the Caribbean office within the next few weeks.

International News

From Mr. Frank Brown 1985 has gotten off to a good start with steady growth continuing in all areas administered by the U.K. office. PLAIN TRUTH circulation in the U.K. and Eire is up 34.3% over January, 1984. A new series of advertisements will begin in the Sunday newspaper colour supplements, and is expected to bring in a good response.

The GOOD NEWS list is up 18.5% over January, 1984. The response to The GOOD NEWS offer to PLAIN TRUTH subscribers who have been on file for two years or more has been staggering. Within one week of mailing, the response had reached 22% and to date stands at 42.7%! With this unprecedented growth in the GOOD NEWS list, we have now reached the point where it is more economical to print the magazine for this area in England, and this is planned beginning with the April issue.

Mail income for January 1985 is down by 7.3% over last January. This is because last January had an exceptionally high income. However, January 1985 still had the third highest mail income ever for one month.

Scandinavia: The English and Norwegian language editions of The PLAIN TRUTH now have a combined circulation of almost 35,000, an increase of 206% over January, 1984. The GOOD NEWS list has grown by 8.5% and co-workers by 68.6%.

Europe: The PLAIN TRUTH file for the continent of Europe is now over 40,000 --up 14.6% from January, 1984. This is accompanied by a 63.6% increase in GOOD NEWS circulation and a 10.2% increase in co-workers. Literature mailed to this area increased 41.8% over January, 1984 to 12,597 items; and the number of letters answered by our Personal Correspondence Department has gone up by 24%.

Middle East: PLAIN TRUTH circulation in the Middle East continues to grow, and is now 13,225, 45.9% higher than January, 1984. GOOD NEWS circulation increased 151.7%, and the co-worker list is up by 76.9%. The January mail count for this area is 55.6% more than January, 1984 and is almost double the December, 1984 count. The 9,972 items of literature mailed in January is up by 245%, and the number of letters answered by PCD increased by over 200%. These remarkable figures show the steady growth in this area of the world, the focal point of much biblical prophecy.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSINGSemiannual Letter the Major Source of Co-workers

Mr. Armstrong's semiannual letters continue to be the leading source of new co-workers--those who are interested in helping to spread the Gospel to the world through their tithes and offerings on a more regular basis. For example, the November, 1984 semiannual resulted in 3,000 people becoming co-workers. This shows the value of our prayers for God's blessing upon these letters. The semiannuals are especially effective for three reasons:

1. Mr. Armstrong expresses a very warm and personal interest in the lives of our PLAIN TRUTH readers.
2. He conveys a vital and stirring message, usually about prophecy and world events.
3. He offers one or two key pieces of literature.

The total number of co-workers in the U.S. has now passed 57,000. This is the highest number in several years.

Donor Count Tops 100,000

The number of donors (those who send a donation once or twice in a year) has also been steadily increasing. We now have over 100,000 donors. This is the largest count since God inspired Mr. Armstrong to put the Church back on track. The semiannual letter is the second largest source for donor growth, just slightly behind PT renewals, which are number one.

WATS Sabbath Volunteer Program--A Four-year Success Story

Over the past four years, some 3,000 Church members have had the exciting opportunity to answer calls from "WORLD TOMORROW" viewers. Volunteers have also filled in on Holy Days and during the Feast of Tabernacles.

The volunteer program has grown in the same dramatic way as the overall WATS operation. In 1981, just 20 people were needed each Sabbath. Now, more than 100 volunteers answer the phones at Pasadena and another 80 at Big Sandy every Sabbath. (Each person normally serves for three to four hours every six weeks.)

It would cost God's Church approximately \$150,000 per year to pay for the hours donated by volunteers!

Members who have served in this way are grateful for the opportunity and find the experience rewarding. We're very thankful that so many of God's people have cheerfully responded to this need. Here are some comments from volunteers:

Serving on WATS is an awesome privilege! In some ways I think it helps me as much as it does those who call in for the various publications.

B.L. (Pasadena)

It is inspiring and encouraging to hear how enthusiastic and convinced some callers are--even first-time callers. Hearing how

anxious callers are to learn of a better way of life makes me very thankful that I learned the truth many years ago.

P.M. (Pasadena)

It is like a shot in the arm--a real uplift to see the interest people express and to realize how the telecast is having such impact. It makes the whole Sabbath richer.

K.M. (Pasadena)

It is a privilege to come and take calls on the Sabbath. We tithe and pray for the work of God's Church, but here we are able to get a taste of actually doing the work.

M.L. (Pasadena)

Even though I must rise early, I feel the rewards of speaking to people from all over the country, and my possibly being their first contact with the Church, is well worth it. I plan to continue volunteering in the future, so save me a phone!

S.C. (Pasadena)

I have enjoyed the opportunity immensely! It has given me a totally different aspect of the work we're doing in God's Church. Everyone should do it at least once! You just can't understand the full scope of the work without it!

J.S. (Big Sandy)

After living in Pasadena for most of my life and not serving on the WATS Sabbath program, I feel I've been given a "second chance" with WATS opening up in Big Sandy. It is very exciting to hear the interest and enthusiasm of potential new brethren. Thank you for making this service available to us "Texans."

C.B. (Big Sandy)

I've enjoyed it very much. Every call is different. It's very exciting for me to actually have a part in doing God's work. I look forward to it every time it's my turn to serve. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Mrs. G. (Big Sandy)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

MR. GORBACHEV AT THE HELM IN MOSCOW; "CHRISTIAN ROCK" With a speed unprecedented in Soviet history, the ruling hierarchy of the U.S.S.R. selected its new leader on March 11, 1985. The appointment of 54-year-old Mikhail S. Gorbachev as the Communist Party's General Secretary came less than five hours after the announcement of the death of his predecessor, Konstantin Chernenko, 73.

It is no secret that Mr. Gorbachev, a polished, urbane, untypical Soviet leader, had already been earmarked by his fellow members of the ruling Politburo for the top position during Mr. Chernenko's short 13-month-long tenure in office, which had been punctuated by long periods of absence due to illness. The uneventful Chernenko rule followed a similar short 14-

month-long reign by Yuri Andropov. During these two brief spells, the Soviet leadership bristled under the image of a creaky superpower ruled over by infirm leaders. To counteract this, the ten other Politburo members, all of them older than Mr. Gorbachev, reached down to him at last and thereby passed the reigns of power to a new generation. (But of course they will carefully supervise and scrutinize Gorbachev's activities for a considerable period.)

Mr. Gorbachev (pronounced Gor-bah-TCHOFF) was born on March 2, 1931. He is the first Soviet leader to enter the world after the pivotal 1917 Bolshevik revolution. He is also the first one not to have been an adult at the outset of World War II (called the Great Patriotic War by the Soviets). He was only ten years old when Adolf Hitler launched his "Operation Barbarossa" against the Soviets, opening up the eastern front of the war. This fact alone--the lack of a deep personal involvement in the heroic struggle of the 1940s--could have an impact on the future relations of the Soviet Union with the nations of Western Europe.

The generational passing of the baton of power inside the Soviet Union is yet another milestone showing that we are passing into a new age, as we near the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. For an insight into the new "red star" as well as the perspective generally held by the rising generation of Soviet leaders, the NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, in their March 3, 1985 issue, published an article "The Emergence of Gorbachev." Here are key excerpts from the lengthy article that appeared in print before Mr. Gorbachev's accession to power:

The generation that led the Soviet Union from the ravages of Stalinism and World War II through the enormous expansion of power and might over the past three decades is approaching an end. Now a new guard stands poised to take charge, a generation of men in their 50s and 60s, and the question is whether they will prove ready or capable of breathing new life into a system that seems to have followed its leaders into debility and fatigue. More than any other Soviet leader, [Mikhail] Gorbachev has come to personify the new breed....

It was as if in recognition of his importance that a group of heavysset men in dark coats and heavy fur hats marched across the frozen tarmac to a waiting Aeroflot jetliner in December. At the foot of the forward ramp they bid goodbye to Gorbachev, who mounted the steps, pausing for the stiff wave required by the ceremony of a Politburo member setting off on a Kremlin mission. His wife, Raisa Maksimovna, unobtrusively mounted the back steps. In London, the front door opened and the two popped out together, jubilantly waving to the welcoming officials and the banks of photographers.

It was a classic magician's trick: Put a Kremlin heavy into one end, quietly slip an attractive woman into the other, wave through the air and--Presto!--out comes a New Soviet Leader, smiling, charming, gregarious and complete with elegant, educated and cultured wife.

Few in Britain were disappointed.... He wore business suits that made him indistinguishable from the Westerners he courted. She

wore a dark suit one day, an executive pin-stripe with satin blouse the next,...and, at a Soviet Embassy reception, a cream satin two-piece dress, gold lame sandals with chain straps and pearl-drop earrings. It was a measure of Gorbachev's success that he managed to generate excitement without diverging one whit from standard Kremlin lines....

"A Red Star Rises in the East," declared The Sunday Times of London over a profile of Gorbachev. But it was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who provided the most fitting epitaph to the visit. "I like Mr. Gorbachev," said she. "We can do business together."...

Who is the real Gorbachev?... Kremlinologists are wary of spotting another "liberal" in the style of the late Yuri V. Andropov, and the debate over the real Gorbachev has gone back and forth. But if the outlines of the man remain a bit fuzzy still, what has emerged with startling clarity is that this stocky, balding peasant's son from southern Russia, with his pleasant style and calm face, has achieved one of the most dizzying rises in the annals of modern Soviet politics.

A scant three years ago, he was known to the West, where known at all, largely as the youngster of the Politburo, a farm boy two decades younger than most of his comrades.... Yet by the time Chernenko came to power, Gorbachev was the acknowledged second in command of the Soviet Communist Party, an enormously powerful secretary charged with ideology, party cadres and most of the economy, as well, apparently, as agriculture. He has become the rallying point for an increasingly vocal portion of the white-collar elite that is convinced that the Soviet Union's solvency and credibility are at peril without a thorough overhaul of the economy.....

At a meeting of party workers last December, Gorbachev spelled out his program in unusually clear terms: "We will have to carry out profound transformations in the economy and in the entire system of social relations..... Only an intensive, highly developed economy can guarantee the consolidation of the country's positions in the international arena, can permit the country to enter the new millennium as a great and flourishing state."

There is something in the notion of a young, educated and smooth leader advocating change and lambasting the bureaucracy that the West finds irresistible.... Law school graduate, successful politician, foe of bloated bureaucracies and inefficiency, an advocate of change--these are elements dear to a Western heart....

There is...the impression among Russians that he lacks an element of ruthlessness. His rise, after all, was due more to patronage than to brute force. Suslov [Mikhail A. Suslov, the powerful ideologue and kingmaker in Brezhnev's Kremlin] and Andropov may have launched him into an orbit far higher than he could have achieved on his own.... What he does have, probably to a greater degree than any previous candidate for Soviet power, is a platform. He is identified, more closely than any member of the

Politburo, with calls for fundamental changes in economic, organizational and social thinking.... He seems to have the backing of the brighter and younger minds in the Soviet leadership.

Nobody in the Soviet leadership is against economic change. The long lines outside stores alone make any other position politically untenable. But Soviet thinking on the issue has split roughly into two trends. On one side are the "hard-liners," men like [Grigory] Romanov and Prime Minister Nikolai A. Tikhonov, whose solution has been to cry out for more discipline within existing structures, for stronger centralized control, increased party supervision, for ruthless treatment of managers who don't achieve. Against these are ranged the "reformers," with Gorbachev at their head--men who advocate loosening of centralized controls, less party meddling, more self-management, greater use of market mechanisms and financial incentives.... [The success of the reforms in China has had an impact on those advocating reform.]

The greatest barrier before the "reformers" is the institutional resistance of a party bureaucracy that derives its power and privilege from things as they are.... What makes the prospect of internal change more propitious now is a sense of crisis that seems to be spreading among Soviet economic managers, a sense that something must change and change fast. Oil production has fallen off, industrial output is climbing at a snail's pace and agriculture remains in dismal straits. The military is clamoring for more money to match President Reagan's military buildup, and consumers are becoming more vocal in their frustration....

A Soviet Union under Gorbachev or another of his ilk would not be radically different in the immediate future. Yet Gorbachev is a man Mrs. Thatcher found likable and possible to do business with. That and his youth and the pragmatism his statements reflect probably make him as good a Soviet politician as the West can expect.

Mr. Gorbachev could indeed be the spearhead of growing Soviet awareness of the need to cooperate more with Western Europe. In the January 11, 1985 issue of the PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT we quoted the advice of Zbigniew Brzezinski who expressed the belief that "the fear that America may be turning from the Atlantic to the Pacific...justifies a wider economic, and potentially even a political accommodation between an industrially obsolescent Western Europe and the even more backward Soviet bloc, a logical customer for what Western Europe can produce. Why then should not the next generation of Soviet leaders," Brzezinski continued [this was before Gorbachev's election], "be pressed also to come to terms with the fact that the interests of the Soviet people would be better served by a less frustrated and oppressed east-central Europe, partaking more directly of the benefits of all-European cooperation?" The ultimate goal should therefore be, Brzezinski said, "the emergence of a truly European Europe capable both of attracting Eastern Europe and of diluting Soviet control over the region."

In the LOS ANGELES TIMES of March 12, journalist Robert Gillette wrote of the cautious optimism expressed by influential figures in Eastern Europe in the article, "East Europe Hopeful Gorbachev Will Be Somewhat Progressive":

If Eastern Europe had a voice in choosing the new leader of its dominant neighbor, the Soviet Union, it would most likely have picked the man the Kremlin chose--Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

There are few, if any, people in Eastern Europe who harbor illusions that the new general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party is a closet liberal.... Among ordinary Poles--and almost certainly among Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian and other East European workers--there is a widespread feeling that one Soviet leader is indistinguishable from another, that this third Kremlin succession in less than three years will make no more difference in their lives than the last two.

However, among intellectuals and the managers of Eastern Europe's Communist regimes, Gorbachev is widely thought to be the one Kremlin leader most likely to understand the need for modernizing the Soviet economy.... If Gorbachev is able to promote the gradual decentralization of the Soviet economy that many believe he favors, it is assumed that the six nations of Moscow's East European empire will also find it easier to gradually shift toward the kind of semi-market economy that has given Hungary the highest standard of living and the lowest level of popular discontent in Communist Eastern Europe.

Few people hold any hope for revolutionary change, but many believe that Gorbachev is the Soviet figure most likely to look favorably on evolution in Eastern Europe toward something more closely resembling the freedoms Westerners enjoy, so long as it does not threaten Moscow's concept of security.

That last phrase--"so long as it does not threaten Moscow's concept of security"--is the key one. A changed relationship between Eastern Europe and its big brother will likely have to await changes between Western Europe and the U.S.--specifically the souring of relations over Central America, as we covered last week.

The new leadership in Moscow might eventually offer the prospects of "peace" and vastly increased trade--and, at the very least, a neutralization of Eastern Europe--providing the Americans leave the western half. It increasingly appears that only when America's direct presence in Europe is removed and the Soviets relax their grip on the East, will the last tenation revival of the Roman system in Europe arise--in the partial political vacuum created. The passing of the baton of leadership to the new generation of Soviet leaders at this unique time of history is thus a major milestone along the way to fulfilling Bible prophecy.

"Christian Rock"

Finally, here are excerpts from a March 11, 1985 TIME article about a new kind of pop-rock music. The article is entitled "New Lyrics for the Devil's Music."

If you had to guess their name, you might think of the Devil's Disciples or the Beelzebubs. Or perhaps the Killer Bees, which is what the four young men on the stage look like in their tight leather-and-spandex costumes crisscrossed with garish black and

yellow stripes. Piles of makeup, spiky hair and enough dangling chains to tie up half the elephants in Africa complete the picture of the up-to-date heavy-metal rock group. Even the music, the sound of a swarm of angry insects electronically amplified several thousand times, fits the image.

But wait; don't walk away without listening to the words of their song..."So many bands give the devil all the glory. It's hard to understand we want to change the story. We want to rock one way on and on. You'll see the light some day. I'll say Jesus is the way."

The group is actually called Stryper, a name inspired by the biblical assurance that "with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Instead of throwing drumsticks into the audience, these metal missionaries toss out about 500 imitation-leather copies of the New Testament. "We are rock-'n'-roll evangelists," says Drummer Robert Sweet, 24. "Stryper is a modern-day John the Baptist crying in the world of rock for those who don't have the life of Christ to turn on the light switch. Our message is J-E-S-U-S."

Stryper is only one of dozens of groups...all part of gospel, a musical category that also includes soul gospel and hymns. But these new entertainers create sounds that have never been heard in churches, sounds that range from Stryper's heavy beat...to the mellow pop of Amy Grant, who last week won her third Grammy for her song Angels. Indistinguishable--except for their lyrics--from their secular counterparts, these performers represent one of the most interesting, fastest-growing trends in the music world: Christian contemporary music, or evangelical pop.... Its chief audience is the generation of the New Squares, primarily young whites, 24 to 35, who like the beat of rock but disavow the drugs and sexual permissiveness that are associated with it. "The people who buy my records like danceable, modern music, but they don't want to feel guilty supporting music with trashy lyrics," says Steve Taylor, 27, who sings his own songs. "Rock is associated with evil, but that is guilt by association. Music is music, and it is the vehicle of expression for my generation."

The rationale behind "Christian Rock" is really nothing new. The false churches have a tradition of absorbing the customs of this world and coating them with a veneer of so-called Christianity.

And while we're on the subject, that new record cut by 45 American pop-rock artists for the benefit of African famine relief, contains an interesting phrase repeated again and again throughout the song: "We are the world, we are the children." Truer words were never sung. But since the lyrics are repetitious and lack a bit of originality, the writers should have included passages from II Cor. 4:4, John 8:44 and I John 2:15-17, to name only a few.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau