

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Mr. Herbert Armstrong returned last Friday, May 24, from a very successful and profitable trip to Europe and the Middle East. More details of his activities are in the May 27 WORLDWIDE NEWS.

Mr. Armstrong gave the afternoon sermon on Pentecost here in the Auditorium. During the sermon, he cautioned us as ministers to be sure we are continually reminding God's Firstfruits of the purpose of their calling--that God wants His people to be preparing now to become teachers and rulers with Christ when He returns to reestablish the government of God on the earth.

The ministers of this world simply do not understand the great purpose God is working out here on earth. They do not understand the truth about the Kingdom of God and God's government. They do not know the purpose of God's Church and of the meaning of Pentecost. Consequently, their sermons are spiritually shallow, concerned almost entirely with the here and now, focusing mainly on "getting saved" now--on personal salvation.

David alluded to the ultimate purpose of God's Firstfruits in Psalm 51:12-13 when he cried out, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." God has called us to repentance and salvation for just that reason--that we might teach transgressors God's way and have a part in the eventual reeducation and conversion of the whole world!

We must make sure that our sermons and Bible studies continually reflect the purpose of our calling--the reason God has placed us in His Church now. We must not preach as the ministers of this world do, about Christian living as an end in itself, or for a personal reward only, omitting the real substance and depth of the meaning and purpose of what God has called us to be a part of, and to be preparing for. Mr. Armstrong's article in the May 1985 issue of The GOOD NEWS pointed this out:

Jesus said "No one can come to Me" during this 6,000-year period except God the Father specially calls them (John 6:44)--and He has called this very few not just for salvation, but for a special service preparing for the coming Kingdom of God, as well.

After that 6,000 years expires, Jesus Christ will come again to earth, this time in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY, to set up GOD'S GOVERNMENT on earth....

For us now, it is imperative that we understand that those CALLED and inducted by God into His Church NOW have been called for MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. We are called, every one of us, for a PART in preparing for the Kingdom of God!

For our part now, in this present "Philadelphia era," each of you is called for the mission of loyally backing up the GREAT COMMIS-

SION of proclaiming the true Gospel to the whole world--and one important thing more: When Jesus comes to RULE, His wife THE CHURCH will have made herself ready--to be holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And we in the Church as a whole HAVE NOT ATTAINED FULLY TO THAT HOLY STATURE AS YET.

And our work is not finished until we do allow God to bring us unitedly to that state--ready to leave this world of flesh and blood and to enter an entirely NEW WORLD--the Church made immortal, composed of SPIRIT! Our job to which God has called us is far from finished!

The point is, we must strive to keep our minds on what God's mind is on--the restoration of His government to this earth. The Church of God exists to do His work in preparation for that. That's the purpose for the Church! Point the members to the work God is doing through His Church. Regularly direct their attention to THE WORLDWIDE NEWS and The GOOD NEWS, rehearsing and discussing news, growth, events, trends and developments in the end-time work God has called them to support and participate in.

Mr. Armstrong has often mentioned that the extent to which our hearts are in the work of God's Church will be the extent to which we are growing spiritually. Your instruction, encouragement and continual interest and enthusiasm about the various aspects of the work of the Church in your sermons and Bible studies should always revolve around the need to be preparing ourselves to be teachers of God's laws, as well as rulers, in His coming Kingdom.

God is deeply concerned about His Kingdom, and about His Church, which is the "embryo" of that Kingdom. We ministers, as we teach God's people, must be deeply concerned as well, keeping in mind that our job is to train them to be teachers. We are not working with the brethren just to help them attain salvation, or just to "make it into the Kingdom." We must help them prepare for the great work ahead in that Kingdom through the work we are doing now of supporting Mr. Armstrong in proclaiming the message of the Kingdom of God to this world.

Let's all continue to ask God for help and inspiration in giving His people the spiritual meat they need, which is so different from anything this dying world can offer or understand.

As a final note, please remember to pray for our brethren in Sri Lanka. Terrorist activity and political unrest continue to be threats to the safety of citizens there. (See the back page of the May 27 WN.) God, of course, has protected His people from the violence. Let's all pray for His continued intervention for the ongoing safety of His Church in this area.

Recent Ordinations

Mr. Kim Wenzel, associate pastor of the Bonnyville, Alberta congregation, was raised in rank from local elder to preaching elder by Canadian regional director Colin Adair on May 14. Also raised to preaching elder was Mr. Bruno LeClerc, of the Val d'Or, Quebec congregation. He was ordained by French regional director Dibar Aparentian on May 25.

Also on May 14, Mr. Adair ordained Mr. Joel King, formerly a ministerial trainee, now a local elder and associate pastor of the Vancouver, British Columbia congregation. And on May 11, in South Africa, regional director Roy McCarthy, assisted by Mr. Frank Nelte, ordained Mr. Neil Becker a local elder in the East London congregation.

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

Caribbean Feast Sites

As mentioned in the Caribbean Festival Planner, the deadline for applying to attend the Feast of Tabernacles at a Caribbean site is June 4. Therefore, all Caribbean sites are now closed to further transfer requests. For those who have been accepted to a Caribbean site, the deadline for returning housing deposits is July 2.

International News

From Mr. Frank Brown We were delighted that Mr. Armstrong was able to visit Elstree House for the annual board meetings held on May 3. He arrived in London on Thursday, May 2, and after attending the two board meetings, was guest of honour at a luncheon attended by all full-time staff. Mr. Armstrong addressed them after lunch, giving a preview of his new book. On Sabbath, May 4, he gave an inspiring message to a combined congregation of 816 brethren at the Kensington Exhibition Centre in London. After the service, Mr. Armstrong flew to Brussels, and then returned to Elstree House on Sunday to address a local elders conference.

The income for April was the highest ever for one month in the history of the British office--21.5% higher than April 1984, bringing the year-to-date increase to 6.8%.

While PLAIN TRUTH circulation is still around 100,000 in the U.K. and Eire, new subscribers are beginning to come onto our list as a result of our current advertising programme, and we should see rapid growth in the next few months. Over 10,400 new subscribers were added during April.

Delayed renewals have resulted in a temporary dip in PLAIN TRUTH circulation in the overseas areas, except in the Middle East where self-generated growth has offset the losses, so the file is still 17.0% above this time last year. In Black Africa, subscribers receive only one renewal for budgetary reasons, because demand for The PLAIN TRUTH is so high in that area. Circulation there has therefore not been affected by renewal changes and is set on a very steady growth pattern--up 54.5% over 1984.

The GOOD NEWS offer to PLAIN TRUTH subscribers has pulled a very good response from all areas, bringing very healthy growth to the GOOD NEWS files. Here is a summary of the number of offers mailed so far, the responses and the current size of the files:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Offers Mailed</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Response</u>	<u>Current File Size</u>	<u>% Increase Over 1984</u>
U.K./Eire	11,481	6,284	54.7	14,501	94.6
Scandinavia	1,876	762	40.6	1,396	112.8
Cont. of Europe	2,287	1,456	63.7	3,638	136.4
Middle East	758	178	23.5	1,266	170.5
E/W Africa	---	---	---	1,099	47.7

--Joseph Tkach, Ministerial Services

****** TO BE READ IN ALL U.S. CHURCHES ******

SEP Campers and the Measles

All those planning to send children to SEP camps this summer should be informed that there is a measles outbreak in the city of Corpus Christi, Texas. Last year's measles epidemic at Orr, Minnesota began when one child with a fever entered a busload of campers. This year we would like to enforce extreme caution. Please do not send any child on a bus or plane if he or she has any indication of a fever or illness. Any child who must cancel due to illness will be guaranteed acceptance next year. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

--Kevin O. Dean, YOU

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSING

Good WATS Response on Memorial Day Weekend

The telecast "When Does Life Begin?" (concerning abortion and being "born again") brought in 12,270 calls May 25 and 26. This response is 77% higher than last year's Memorial holiday weekend, when 6,946 calls were received.

The program was shown on several new stations and time slots and the response to those airings was encouraging. For example, the 12:30 p.m. (PT) airing on Los Angeles station KHJ brought in about 300 calls, which is among the highest responses ever from that station. The morning airing on New York station WOR (11:30 a.m. ET) also produced about 300 calls.

Hundreds of callers commented about this program. The overwhelming majority showed enthusiastic support for the biblical proofs given on these controversial topics. Only four people disagreed with what Mr. Armstrong said. Following are a few comments from those who called in:

I would say that Mr. Armstrong showed the greatest understanding and exactness of thought I have ever heard. He has incredible knowledge and continuity. If a person with any sense at all

heard the program, he would have to admit Mr. Armstrong is right. He thoroughly thrashed out this controversial subject and showed the right answer.

Dr. C. (Staten Island, NY)

I was very impressed with the program. I know a girl who is 14 and planning to get an abortion. I want a copy of your publication to give to her. I hope the article will impress upon her the fact that she is carrying a child!

P.D. (Mt. Holly, NJ)

It was a great awakening! I was always taught the opposite in my church. I thought you could sin again and again and you would be forgiven continually. I didn't realize I had to stop sinning. I like the way Mr. Armstrong explained the tree of life. I was really interested in the subject of being "born again."

F.G. (Columbus, OH)

This program really got to me! This is so important! Here I thought I was born again, but I am certainly not! I'm going to have to read that booklet over and over again!

W.A. (Sunnyvale, CA)

I watched Mr. Armstrong this morning. I phoned in because I want to find out whether or not I am "born again." I think I am, but I'm not sure. I've watched Mr. Armstrong before, but not as intently as I did this morning--usually I am preoccupied. Today I concentrated on what he said. He simplified things I couldn't understand before. What he said about abortion is very true.

B.B. (Hollywood, FL)

I like everything Mr. Armstrong has brought forth but I didn't quite agree with today's program. The population increase is staggering--he seems to overlook the fact of the population explosion.

K.M. (Walnut Creek, CA)

Gospel Reaches People in Unique Ways

Sometimes God works in mysterious ways to bring the Gospel to people's attention. Some of the circumstances are quite unusual. For example, people have found PLAIN TRUTHS on their desks or doorsteps, without knowing how they got there. Some have found our literature in trash cans, or lying in the street. One woman was even struck by a windblown PLAIN TRUTH, which she carried home.

The telecast is often discovered by chance or accident. Some were merely switching channels and came across the telecast. One person fell asleep one night with the TV on and awoke the next morning to "The WORLD TOMORROW" program.

In a few interesting cases, people seemed to have no other choice than to hear or see the Gospel. One man was monitoring the telecast as it was being taped for satellite transmission. Another found that during an electrical

storm, he was able to receive only one radio station, and it happened to be airing "The WORLD TOMORROW" at that time. Following are several additional experiences people have related to us:

The first time I read your magazine was when a lady was about to discard it. Well, I'll tell you it was a lucky day for me. I immediately subscribed and am happy that I did. Many myths and misconceptions have been cleared up. May God continue to bless you and your staff.

Ms. M.W. (Chicago, IL)

I am a Nigerian. I first saw a PLAIN TRUTH magazine in my little village of Oduoha-Ogbakiri in 1966 during the Nigerian crisis. I was only 14 years old then. When I asked the boy who was holding the magazine how he got such an American magazine, he told me it was free. I didn't bother any further. Then in 1981 I was in Paris taking a course when I saw another issue of The PLAIN TRUTH. I was surprised it was not extinct like other magazines, and on my return to Nigeria I placed an order for the magazine.

E.O. (Muncie, IN)

Before reading your magazine, I had read the Bible four times and studied the doctrines of several different denominations. The Bible never did make any sense to me. I found fault in the beliefs of every church I attended and I was left with a lot of unanswered questions.

I was about ready to give up when I came across a copy of The PLAIN TRUTH while cleaning up a shopping center parking lot. I was amazed at what I read. Although I had many questions, I kept them all to myself while I ordered booklets and magazines and enrolled in your Bible correspondence course. During the course of my studies I've read the Bible again. My answers were always there, right in my own Bible!

D.W. (Middletown, OH)

I have always believed in God and I believe that Jesus Christ was crucified to save us from damnation, but I have never understood this. I was taught that I didn't need to understand; I just needed to believe. I tried to understand by reading the Bible. But reading the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi proved to be more confusing.

Unable to get any clearer picture from clergymen, I turned to God. I prayed for a better understanding. The very next day I woke up and turned on the television and "The WORLD TOMORROW" was on. Now with the help of your Bible correspondence course, I am learning more of God every day. I thank God for answering my prayers and I thank you for enlightening not only me but also my wife.

P.M. (Pearsall, TX)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENEPOLITICAL SHIFTS UNDER WAY; THE KENNEDY
FACTOR; THE POPE IN HOLLAND

In which direction are the large Western democracies headed in the next few years? William Safire of the NEW YORK TIMES detects what he calls "a fundamental ideological shift" in the short run and a relatively new phenomenon of uncertain "ideological lurching back and forth." He wrote in his May 23 column:

Pundits search for patterns.... I thought I had detected the three parallel trends that signaled the beginning of a fundamental ideological shift.

1. In Britain, after six years of vigorous and much-needed Thatcherism, the Conservatives are now on the run. Prosperity has not conquered high unemployment, and now, with inflation returning, voters are telling pollsters that it's time for a change. 2. In West Germany, after a couple of years of the conservative leadership of Helmut Kohl, voters in state elections are saying Genuch ist genuch, similar to the "Had enough?" theme in America. 3. In the United States, midway in the Reagan years, evidence of displeasure with the conservative tide is mounting....

Three Western powers, three specific shifts: the antennae of trend-spotters quiver at this evidence that the swing to the right is about to be arrested.... Then you come to Paris and the hypothesis gets a frappe sur la tete, which is what the locals call a kick in the head. Socialism is a flop in France and nobody knows that better than the Socialists. Four years ago they took power and began to redistribute wealth and carry out all the anti-capitalist promises. When that nearly bankrupted the country, the practical Mr. Mitterrand reversed course and is now pushing austerity. As a result, the right scorns him for being of the left, and the left is ready to desert him for acting like the right....

France's grand disillusion with socialism seems to say that no pattern exists, that a few countries are going center-left (the U.S., Britain, West Germany) while a few are going the other way (France, Italy, maybe Greece, certainly China).... So what accounts for all this ideological lurching back and forth? The answer is: The support span is shortening. Just as the explosion of mass communication has cut down our attention span, the concentrated exposure of political leaders, especially those with identifiable ideologies, has cut down the time that voters lend them their support.

Do you have the answer, Political Leader, to sustained prosperity equitably shared, with no loss of freedom? O.K., we'll give you a chance. You say you've achieved most of your goals, and need more time? Sorry, you promised more and sooner, so out you go, and it's the next ideology's turn.

If the shortened support-span hypothesis is correct we shall soon see a growth of the center and a period of depolarized politics. Boring. In Britain the center's David Owen will promise Thatcherism without Thatcher. In West Germany Johannes Rau presents himself as a cool Kohl; in the U.S., the Cuomo-Kennedy-Hart alternative is an un-Reagan-like Reaganism. Because the support span is so short, we are offered adaptation, not change.

There is little doubt that Senator Edward M. (Ted or Teddy) Kennedy is actively pursuing the Democratic Party candidacy in 1988. He says his family members would not be opposed to a run for the White House; his own man now chairs the Democratic Party's national committee; and he is sporting a trimmer figure these days, leading one pundit to say "Ted Kennedy is losing weight; the Republic's in danger." Most significantly, Mr. Kennedy has publicly urged Democrats to shift their highly divided party back toward the mid-stream center, to become less beholden (visibly at least) to special interests. He and other Democrats say that even past welfare programs pushed through by their party should not be looked upon as sacrosanct. The following are excerpts from an article entitled "Teddy's Back" written by John McLaughlin, which appeared in the May 17 NATIONAL REVIEW:

The evidence is now conclusive: Count Teddy not only in the race for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination but determined to go all out to get it, despite many in the liberal Democratic establishment who think he is out of his mind. Exhibit A, the avoirdupois factor: He's lost twenty pounds, to regain the lean and photogenic look. Exhibit B, the hawk factor: Teddy is moving onto the Armed Services Committee.

Exhibit C, the tour of Ethiopia and other famine zones of Africa by the Kennedy entourage. This had its humanitarian impulse, doubtless, but it also served his political ends. Also, Teddy figures prominently in the apartheid/disinvestment debate over South Africa; he leans toward punitive economic measures, a safe political posture for him and one that will stroke Democratic liberals....

Of all the potential Democratic contenders, Kennedy has the most powerful political-action committee (PAC), which gives him a distinct competitive edge. His Fund for a Democratic Majority...has a donor list of well over 100,000 names, "a tremendous advantage" over anyone who waits until 1986 to enter the race, says William Carrick, Kennedy's Senate staff political director. "No one else will be able to touch us," he boasts. What makes PACs important is that individual contributions to federal candidates are limited to \$1,000 per election, which means that contenders must have a large grid of small donors for the early money needed to underwrite direct-mail programs and consequent campaign operations....

What has attracted Washington's notice recently has been Teddy's sudden rhetorical lurchings to the right, especially his Hofstra University address and remarks at a Democratic think-tank meeting in West Virginia. "We cannot and should not depend on higher tax revenues to roll in and redeem every costly program," observed the nation's high priest of liberalism. "The mere existence of a

program is no excuse for its perpetuation, whether it is a welfare plan or a weapons system."...

Although Teddy utters these trendy remarks with high energy and full-throated oratory, nothing in his voting record in recent years suggests any movement away from liberalism.... No matter; the public probably won't check the rhetoric against the record....

Kennedy's biggest worry is [New York Governor] Mario Cuomo, the new darling of the liberal establishment.... But Kennedy currently outdistances Cuomo and all others in the Garth survey... (Garth also has Teddy leading [Vice President George] Bush by six points and [Republican Congressman Jack] Kemp by 12.) Certain Yuppie control groups are testing out in favor of EMK, too. Recall that that constituency makes up 43 per cent of the vote, a sector that might be more willing to let Kennedy submerge the 16-year-old Chappaquiddick issue, so to speak. Watch out for Teddy the Centrist.

Dutch Treat

Never in all his previous foreign travels, not even in Nicaragua, was Pope John Paul II so rudely received as on his recent trip to the Netherlands. There he was met by rock-throwing crowds (some sporting "Popebusters" emblems), a stubbornly liberal national church leadership and embarrassingly small crowds. Here are excerpts of his ordeal as published in the May 28, 1985 international edition of NEWSWEEK:

Wherever he travels, Pope John Paul II usually basks in attention and adulation. But for four days in the Netherlands last week, the pontiff was hounded and harassed as never before. In Utrecht as many as 3,000 radicals, militant homosexuals, punk rockers, skinheads and even a few liberal Roman Catholics gathered in a downtown square to protest John Paul's visit. Some of the demonstrators, dressed as priests and pregnant nuns, shouted "Kill the pope," while others released bunches of helium-filled condoms into the air to mock the Vatican's policy against birth control....

In part, the stormy welcome was yet another symptom of the "Dutch disease," a mixture of rebellious rudeness and self-righteous moralizing that is deeply rooted in the Dutch character. But the protests told only half the story. John Paul's toughest challenge came from the moderately liberal, mainstream core of the Dutch church. In meetings with the pope, Catholics sharply criticized current church policy on a gamut of modern social issues. The contentious reception shocked Vatican officials accustomed to friendlier greetings.

The pope avoided showing any trace of anger and never stepped back from his crusade for a "Catholic Restoration" intended to solidify the Vatican's control over the church and to reinforce conservative values among its flock of 800 million. Even so, the papal visit...raised anew the question whether Rome someday may be forced either to grant limited autonomy to dissident national churches or risk losing them from the fold altogether.

The pope knew he was in for a confrontation. Public-opinion polls showed that few Dutch Catholics welcomed his visit to their free-thinking country. Protests began the week before he arrived, and an ugly series of posters offering "rewards" for the pope's assassination appeared in Amsterdam and other cities. Though few people took the threats seriously, they cast a pall over the trip....

Holland's 5.5 million Catholics--nearly 40 percent of the population--have forged a resolute and liberal tradition. Since the early 1960s, many church leaders have advocated the ordination of women as priests, the loosening of rules against birth control, premarital sex, divorce and homosexuality and the right of lay persons to celebrate mass.... Just last February the pope named Johannes ter Schure, a noted conservative, as bishop of 's Hertogenbosch, sparking rebellious protests by more liberal Dutch Catholics. "It doesn't matter any more what the pope tells us or what these old bishops are saying," said Tine Halkes, professor of theology at Nijmegen University and a prominent Catholic liberal. "Our own church marches on."...

At times John Paul appeared to concede somewhat to Dutch sensibilities by dropping controversial passages from prepared texts. But on one subject, the pope rejected compromise. The church's words on "marital love, abortion, sexual relations before or outside marriage or homosexual relations," he said, "remain the standard for the church for all time."...

Even...as his authority was being called into question, John Paul managed to be characteristically disarming. He charmed many Dutchmen by delivering all but one of his speeches in their difficult language, asking them to "Forgive my Dutch." [He had studied Dutch an hour a day for several months.] The pope may also have won over a few supporters by his unruffled handling of the unruly demonstrators, whose behavior surely embarrassed many Hollanders. In fact, an opinion poll taken just after John Paul departed found that his popularity had risen considerably. Nearly 70 percent of those asked said they liked the pope, a significant jump from the 41 percent who answered favorably before the visit.

Even so, it is unlikely that the fiercely independent Dutch will give in so easily to John Paul's plea for Catholic unity on many of today's most divisive issues. For now, not even the most outspoken Dutch Catholics advocate a break with Rome. But if John Paul continues to demand uncompromising obedience, the Dutch may one day be forced to make the choice.

The Dutch are certainly "stiff-necked Israelites," as the following interview with Ruud Lubbers, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, seems to confirm. The interview also appeared in the same issue of NEWSWEEK:

NEWSWEEK: In speaking to the pope, you referred to Dutch distrust of the Vatican. What did you mean?

LUBBERS: The mere fact that Rome tells us Dutchmen something is enough for us to respond negatively. If the pope said tomorrow that every Dutch priest should marry, even that would bring an outcry of disgust. We Dutch are just very independent minded. It has nothing to do with chauvinist feelings, but the Dutch hate anybody telling them what to do. When OPEC put pressure on Europe, it was assumed we would all give in. The Dutch were the exception. We didn't want to be pushed around....

Q. Vatican officials say that Holland is a prosperous nation in danger of losing its soul. Do you agree?

A. No. In Holland criticism sometimes reflects struggles within the church. Rome has to admit that.

At the Hague, Mr. Lubbers, who is Catholic, improvised on his prepared statement to tell the Pope, "In Holland, we are tolerant toward people who are different or who think differently." The clear message was that the Pope was not. "To be quite frank," Lubbers added, "simply the word Rome makes some people uneasy, if not downright suspicious."

A further insight into the controversy generated by the papal trip to the Netherlands appeared in the May 23 NEW YORK TIMES:

Two themes emerged clearly in conversations with Vatican officials during the Pope's journey. The first was that one of the biggest problems the Pope sees with liberal Dutch Catholics is their failure to use the same moral yardsticks as Rome. "Others are at least willing to acknowledge that they're sinners," said one high-ranking Vatican official. "The Dutch are not."

The second is that the Pope understands that one of the prices he will pay for his outspoken public reassertion of traditional values is outspoken public opposition. "He can accept that," said another Vatican official, adding that this did not imply that the Pope is willing to change his views. This has important implications for the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops the Pope called for this November to re-examine the results of the Second Vatican Council.... The Pope has always called himself a strong advocate of Vatican II. But in an address to Belgian Bishops on Saturday, the Pope made clear that he shares the misgivings of many conservatives who believe that liberals have pushed the "spirit of the Council" too far....

The Pope sees one of the tasks of this November's meeting as rooting out certain "secular"--some would say liberal--ideas that have grown up inside the Church since the time of the Council in the early 1960s. Such Catholics in the Netherlands and Belgium say that the Church can update its views on many matters without losing its Christian or specifically Catholic identity. The Pope, however, has said many times that this process can amount to nothing more than "calling good, evil; and evil, good."

On his arrival in Rome on Monday, in advance of his elevation to Cardinal Saturday, Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York said

the Pope may be leading the Church into "a new era" involving a more aggressive affirmation of its traditional principles.

This may well be the message of the trip to the Low Countries: that the Pope is quite prepared to listen to criticism, quite understanding that the road he proposes is neither easy nor popular. It is equally clear that no amount of criticism will make him change direction.

A recent article in the LOS ANGELES TIMES asked why the young people in Holland felt they had to display their feelings so openly and rudely. Were they afraid that the Pope might actually be correct in many of his moral pronouncements, such as against homosexuality and living-togetherness? Were they, in the back of their own minds, aware that their hedonistic society had only brought pain, suffering and emptiness? They couldn't admit they were wrong, so they felt compelled to violently defend their wayward freedoms, speculated the author.

The Catholic Church throughout Western Europe is in bad shape. Even in Belgium and Luxembourg (a formerly Catholic stronghold) the Pope's crowds were small, albeit polite, leading one observer to note that "the prosperous Luxembourgois and Belgians do not care enough about the Pope, or the church to which most of them nominally belong, to register a protest."

It is only in John Paul's native Poland, it seems, that real zeal for the church in Europe still exists. Might it be that Catholicism will never be able to revivify Europe until Europe is made one, in order that the flames still burning brightly behind the Iron Curtain can reignite deadened passions in the West? Similarly, in the secular field, German patriotism will likely never be restored until the U.S.-patterned Federal Republic can be linked with the "fossilized" German state in the east. (Young West Germans visiting the DDR often state that they feel "more German" there). It's as if the spirit necessary to reanimate the future united Europe remains locked up in the East for future use.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau