

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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REPORT FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

October Report Since the Feast of Tabernacles many people have asked me about the Holy Day offerings and how much more was received this year than last. I would have liked to report about them earlier in the "Pastor General's Report" to ministers or in the post-Feast edition of "The Worldwide News." The reason I did not is that all the factors were not yet known; in fact, some are still not known. The increases for Trumpets, Atonement and the first day of Tabernacles did not reach our budget estimates of a 12% increase, but averaged about 7% or 8%.

The Last Great Day appeared to be outstanding with a 32% increase. This year members in the U.S. and Canada were asked to add any excess Festival tithe to the offering, instead of turning it in separately. That is possibly the reason for the unusually large increase. Until the end of the year when all Festival tithe offerings are totaled, we will not know for sure.

The Holy Day offerings for the year are approximately 9% more than 1984. The combined months of September-October are 7.5% more, and the year-to-date stands at 10.4% more than last year.

These increases are not as great as we had hoped for in 1985, and do not reach our income budget on which our expense budget was built. During the year we have also increased our expenses considerably to take advantage of unusual and unexpected opportunities in media. As a result of these factors, our cash reserves were lower than anticipated, and were temporarily depleted at our expected low point just before the Feast. This is the first time that has happened since I was made treasurer. We must not permit this to happen again, so it is necessary to trim back to where we can again have acceptable levels of reserves.

The Scriptures promise that God will supply our need; in fact, Jesus said that before we even ask, God knows what the need is. I believe God has supplied the need, but we possibly have sometimes not adequately used those funds. Please pray that God will guide Mr. Armstrong and all who are involved in any financial aspect of the Church to use the funds the way He wants, and not the way we think may be right.

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The budget process for 1986 has begun. First for the international offices, then the U.S. departments. This is a difficult but essential task each year. Your prayers and financial support are greatly needed and appreciated.

--Leroy Neff, Treasurer

FROM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

CASH FLOW; OVERCOMING; PRAYER UPDATES;
FEATURE FEAST REPORT; INTERNATIONAL NEWS--PHILIPPINES

Cash Flow Mr. Armstrong has often stated that when our ways please God, He will bless us. It is obvious that God has granted unprecedented growth to the Church over the last five years. Many new doors have opened, offering greater opportunities to fulfill the responsibility God has given us to proclaim the Gospel of His soon-coming Kingdom. Along with these open doors comes the continuing responsibility to see that our ways keep pleasing God.

Over the last few weeks, it has become apparent that we will be experiencing a cash-flow problem during the first quarter of next year, unless there is a dramatic upturn in income between now and then. God has given us much growth and has opened many doors. We have, as God has always led us to do, walked through as many of those doors as seemed prudent, asking for God's guidance. We must trust God for His blessing to be able to make all the resulting financial commitments.

However, we in Pasadena must also be constantly aware that God holds us responsible as good stewards to hold back on any less important areas of expense that do not relate so directly to fulfilling the commission God has given us. In addition, we must continually evaluate the television stations we are using, dropping those that are less productive and using the funds to cultivate those that are more productive. In the same way, we must regularly evaluate our newsstand outlets, placing "The Plain Truth" magazines we have available in the most productive locations. In all this we need God's Spirit to lead and direct us in making the decisions He wants made.

As part of the overall effort to bring our reserves up to the point that the projected cash-flow problem can be controlled, we are requesting that U.S. and Canadian church pastors do what many of you have already volunteered many times before, which is to send in as a general contribution your local church activity funds. The combined total of these accounts will be of significant help in shoring up our year-end reserves in preparation for the next quarter's expenditures. (Rather than closing these accounts out totally, you should plan to leave a token amount in so that the accounts can remain open.)

Obviously this will represent a special sacrifice on the parts of your congregations. This will mean that upcoming Church activities, tournaments, etc. will need to be canceled for the time being.

I know, however, that the hearts of God's people are tuned in to His Work. The events of the last several years have proven that. The broad majority will appreciate the opportunity to help the Work in this way. In one way, I hate to make this request, but in another, I know God also appreciates our unrelenting commitment to Him and our willingness to do all we can in these final days of the devil's society.

Let each of us yield ourselves to God more fully as we rapidly approach the time when Jesus Christ will return to establish His Father's Kingdom. As always, God's will shall be done. As His ministers, set the pace in your congregations in fulfilling Paul's instruction in Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Overcoming The apostle Paul gives us a powerful admonition to carefully remain faithful, realizing who our enemy is and how to overcome him, in Ephesians 6:10-20. Paul reminds us that the devil, who is still the unseen ruler of this present evil world, is the one we must fight. He shows us how to stand against this foe by putting on the whole armor of God, which includes truth, righteousness, the true gospel, faith, the hope of salvation and the Word of God. He points out the need to be in close contact with God, to be praying that all God's people remain steadfast and faithful with us. He then concludes this passage admonishing that we pray earnestly for God's apostle that he may be given the ability to proclaim the Gospel boldly.

In these 11 verses Paul shows us the important role that overcoming, coupled with faithful prayer, plays in doing the Work of God. God desires that our hearts be in His Work. He wants us to share the commitment, the zeal, the love for His Work that He and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, have. Therefore God loves and appreciates our prayers for His Work. He sees them as sweet incense (Revelation 5:8).

But of what value are our prayers unless our attitudes are right toward God? Unless we are striving to overcome our sins, faults and shortcomings? God says He hears the prayers of the righteous. And indeed He considers us righteous if we humbly seek His will in every aspect of our lives and are willing to change. When our ways please God, He will bless us.

All God's firstfruits have a part. Each of us around the world must realize the need to heed God's admonition to "come out of her, my people" (Rev. 18:4). We must each individually do our part to seek God's help in seeing where we may be letting down spiritually, and then put His Spirit to work in changing. In this way God will hear our prayers and grant us His blessing as His tools in doing His Work.

Prayer Updates As Mr. Richard Rice points out later in this issue, brethren around the world are continuing to express their concern about Mr. Armstrong's health. He reminds us daily of his deep appreciation for the love and prayers of God's people. I know you and your congregations are remaining steadfast in requesting God's complete healing for Mr. Armstrong and for his restoration to full capacity.

Mr. Jim Friddle had a cancer in his bladder removed, and now seems to have fully recovered with no sign of any further cancer. Mrs. James Reyer, though she still has the cancer, is feeling well and is functioning normally. Also, Mr. Keith Brittain is progressing very well and may be able to return to full-time service in the near future. We were saddened by the death this past Sabbath morning of Mrs. Marie Blackwell, mother of Messrs. Dean, Tom and Mike Blackwell, from breast

cancer. Mrs. Blackwell led a rich life and died in the faith, having contributed three fine ministers to God's Church. Please continue to pray for the complete healing of Mrs. Leonard Schreiber, Mrs. Carrol Miller, Dr. William Kessler, Mrs. David Hulme and Mr. Carn Catherwood. In addition, I'd like to ask that you include Molly Moskel, 3-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Moskel, who is suffering from leukemia, to your prayer list.

God knows our needs before we ask. Yet our love one for another is perfected as we bear one another's burdens in times of trial. Thank you on behalf of all these for your prayerful support.

Feature Feast Report

From Mr. Roderick Meredith My family and I had the privilege of visiting all four of the British Feast sites this year: Dunoon, Scotland; Southport, England; Tenby, Wales and Jersey in the Channel Islands. Having been absent from Britain since 1975, it was a great joy to me personally to meet so many of the brethren I had known and loved at each Feast site along the way.

Overall, we found the British brethren in a fine attitude and in good spirits in spite of many physical handicaps. Many of the brethren are unemployed or underemployed, yet their zeal for the Church and their generous participation in the offerings were evident.

In Dunoon, many of the brethren and ministers were able to stay in small "chalets," or cabins, with self-contained cooking facilities. This was ideal for families, and the chalets were situated in a beautiful area along the coast with fine views.

In Tenby, many of the brethren stayed at a "Holiday Camp" where they could live inexpensively in "caravans," or small mobile homes. The meeting hall was right there, so that made it convenient for the majority to make it to services and participate in other activities.

On Jersey, the hall where services were held was literally inside an old fort built hundreds of years ago by the British to protect against any invaders from the Continent. Our brethren drove up the hill and through the gate in the high stone walls surrounding the fort. Interestingly, Jersey was the only part of Britain occupied by German troops during World War II. Some cannons and gun emplacements from this era are still intact. Talk about atmosphere and historical surroundings! Yet, inside the hall, as in all the British Feast sites, the true servants of the living God were having encouraging and inspiring sermons about the soon-coming intervention of the great GOD--and the wonderful age of PEACE to follow.

From Mr. John Halford The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the People's Republic of China in the city of Nanjing for the second time.

Some two hundred sixty four people, mainly from the United States, Canada and Australia, attended. Most of them agreed that the Feast was outstanding in every way, and truly the experience of a lifetime.

China is notorious for changing the plans of tourist groups at the last minute, and we had several close calls. For example, at one stage, with only 12 hours notice, we were politely informed that the main party of 140 Americans could not arrive in Nanjing until the morning of the First Holy Day. Although we have always tried to be patient and understanding in China, we dug our heels in and explained that it was essential that we all be in Nanjing together for the opening of our convention on Sunday evening. The Chinese were a bit surprised at our sudden firmness because we were known in China to be a friendly and cooperative group.

We explained that we were, but on some things we would not compromise. When they saw that we were not going to back down, the Chinese did everything they could to help us, even moving a convention of 500 Japanese businessmen to whom they had assigned our meeting room (presuming that we would not be there till the following day).

The fact that we had a large contingent (87) from Australia this year added a special dimension to the Feast. Most of the American members who went to China had never met Australians. Likewise, many of the Australians had not traveled widely before. By the end of the Feast the two groups were indistinguishable (until they opened their mouths), and many lasting friendships were made. This aspect of unity was a special feature of the Feast in China.

I reminded the members that they had a special responsibility to conduct themselves with proper decorum in the People's Republic of China, since each delegate to the Feast was a special representative of the Work. It is impossible to preach the Gospel verbally in China at the moment. However, the Feast of Tabernacles has shone a light and it seems that the Chinese have noticed it.

We were told many times that our people were indeed different. I should point out that the average size group to tour China is about 28. Guides and interpreters dread larger groups since they associate them with confusion, disorder and complaining, something the Chinese dread. When they see how quickly God's people take care of each other, organize themselves, have discipline and follow instructions, the Chinese are astonished. Most other tour groups seem to be utterly tired of China after about five days, and their only concern is "getting their money's worth."

Those of us who had the privilege of serving God's people at the Feast in China (myself, Hal Baird, Colin Kelly, Gene Hogberg, Fred Stevens and Frank Fish) considered the Feast to be in every way a success, and are thankful for this unusual opportunity.

International News

From Mr. Guy Ames Philippine Office Manager Rod Matthews completed a tour of scattered members in the northern Pacific in late August. We have been striving to maintain closer contact and better serve those in Guam, Yap, Saipan and in Japan. Mr. Matthews conducted a Bible study on Guam for the two members there and completed arrangements for their attendance at Philippine sites for the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Yap, southwest of Guam, where we have one member and only eight "Plain Truth" subscribers, a newsstand was established in a local business establishment. Mr. John Yugummang, the member there, had made arrangements with the manager of a general supermarket to set up a countertop stand. The first issue made available was the introductory copy of "The Plain Truth." Subsequent issues will be shipped directly from Pasadena as a result of Yap being a part of the United States postal system, which still operates throughout the region of the Caroline Islands, although the area is in the process of obtaining independence under the name of the Federated States of Micronesia.

After a brief visit with the only member in Saipan, a Filipino who will soon be returning to the Philippines, Mr. Matthews went to Japan to spend time with our only two members there and to respond to some visit requests. The visit was highlighted by the reinstatement of a former (Japanese) member who had survived some severe family pressures, among other things, and wanted to come back to the Church. Since she speaks no English, extended counseling had to be conducted via an interpreter. A visit with a prospective member was also made in the city of Kobe, but another visit requestor failed to make contact on this trip. The slowly increasing interest in Japan is exciting, and the visit was most successful considering the isolation of the members there (and the 50 % increase in membership on this occasion). This completed the two planned trips to the region for the year and highlighted the need to regularly maintain the contact via this means.

During the break from the Ministerial Education Program in the Philippines, several "Plain Truth" subscriber lectures were conducted in the Visayas region on a trial basis. The results were very pleasing. Lectures were conducted in the cities of Tagbilaran, Dumaguete and Cebu by Mr. Reynaldo Taniajura on two consecutive afternoons, covering prophecy and how it related to those attending.

In Tagbilaran, 168 subscribers attended, 16% of those invited, while in Dumaguete, 924 subscribers received invitation letters and 8% or 74 attended. In Cebu City, the second largest city in the Philippines, lectures were conducted on September 7 and 8 and 151 new people attended, 11% of the list. The results are pleasing and reflect the interest of many new subscribers who have been added in the last couple of years. The quality of those attending was good and many asked discerning Bible questions and requested further Church contact.

--Joseph Tkach, Church Administration

FROM EDITORIAL SERVICES

MYSTERY OF THE AGES; PT CIRCULATION;
MARCH PT; ARTICLE; FEAST REPORTS

Mystery of the Ages Greetings from Editorial. Have you seen Mr. Armstrong's new book "Mystery of the Ages" in your bookstores yet? They are prominently displayed in several bookstores here in Pasadena, and photos of displays in other areas have been sent to us.

Greg S. Smith, responsible for the graphic design of the book, just returned Wednesday, October 23, from a press-color check of the softbound version. The cover is being printed in York, Pennsylvania; the interior in Fairfield, Pennsylvania. The same specially mixed royal-purple ink is being used, with the title embossed in gold foil. The inch-thick softbound edition has 336 pages. This book will be offered in next month's semiannual letter to "Plain Truth" subscribers who are not members or co-workers. Those in that category on the "Good News" mailing list have already received the same offer.

PT Circulation Some interesting information from Mail Processing: "Plain Truth" circulation worldwide, now just under eight million, represents an average growth rate of 22 percent a year for this front-line publication of God's Work. We can certainly be grateful for such phenomenal growth in the last 52 years. During the Feast I learned that "Plain Truth" subscriptions in Sri Lanka are higher than those of "Reader's Digest," "Time" and "Newsweek" combined in that country.

March PT In our March "Plain Truth" planning session, Herman L. Hoeh, "PT" editor, wrapped up the February issue with a cover article, by Mike Snyder on Halley's comet, that will point to what really does predict the future--God's Word. Articles for March include "Mystery of Israel," chapter 5 of Mr. Armstrong's book, and Mr. Armstrong's new booklet "Are We in the Last Days?"

Also tentatively scheduled are articles on teen pregnancy, showing that both boys and girls suffer from permissive sex, "Canada's Nuclear Dilemma" by Neil Earle, "New Covenant--Does It Abolish God's Laws?" by Ron Kelly and "The Real Root of Bitterness" by Jeff Zhorne, which will analyze what is really going wrong in relations between the races.

Article Clayton Steep's article in October titled "What Most Taxpayers Have Not Been Told" brought this interesting response: "As a retired CPA...and a Roman Catholic, it disgusts me to see how many of my religious persuasion believe they liquidate their obligations to God by dropping a one-dollar bill in the collection plate on Sundays, knowing they spend well over one dollar for a package of cigarettes...a can of beer, and from \$1.75 up for a cocktail.... I trust God will look favorably when I reach the judgment seat...that I was fortunate enough to make contributions of 26.79% of my income to church and other charitable organizations."

Feast Reports We appreciate Festival coordinators turning in your reports to "The Worldwide News" so soon. Eighty-nine out of 92 sites are in. Our goal is 100 percent coverage for our November 4 issue.

--Dexter Faulkner, Editorial Services

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSING

GET-WELL CARDS; WATS CALLS UP; RECORD MONTH; "BUSY OUTS"

Get-Well Cards Get-well cards are flooding in to Mr. Armstrong from all over the world. Members are deeply concerned about his health and wrote to assure him of their continued prayers. Some had never written

before. A number of cards were signed by several people. All cards are forwarded to Mr. Armstrong's office. Here are a few comments:

"We had a real great Feast, but one thing we missed and were looking forward to was to hear and see you live from Pasadena. It saddened us to hear that you were ill. You will have our continuous prayers...."

Tennessee

"I've been a member of God's Church since 1967. I've never written to you before, but I do want to thank you so very much for bringing God's truth to me. We all need you, Mr. Armstrong, in these last days to help prepare us to teach in God's Kingdom."

Indiana

"I just wanted to let you know how much I missed seeing a good friend at the Feast this year. I pray you will soon be feeling better so we can hear from you by a tape in our local churches."

Kansas

WATS Calls Up Over the past few years, we have noticed a shift in the way viewers respond to the "World Tomorrow" program. Many more are now calling to request literature instead of writing. This year 90 percent of those responding used the WATS line. Last year it was 83 percent. In 1983 the figure was 77 percent.

This change is mainly due to Mr. Armstrong's encouragement for viewers to call. Also, the use of the superimposition at the close of the program enables more people to phone us. People find calling quicker, easier and more convenient than writing.

Record Month Pasadena and Big Sandy combined answered a record 85,580 TV calls during September. This surpassed the previous record of 72,793 calls, set in July of this year. This increase can be attributed to better times and stations, more WATS lines and the use of the superimposition.

"Busy Outs" Our WATS lines are currently averaging about 30,000 "busy outs" per month. A "busy out" is recorded when our toll-free number is dialed and the caller receives a busy signal. The majority of callers get through on their first attempt. Some, however, dial a second or third time before reaching us.

In order to reduce the number of "busy outs," 20 additional lines have been ordered for the WATS in-home program. This will not require additional employees. These lines will be manned by volunteers in local church areas.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center