

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION; VISIT REQUESTS; DEDUCTION;
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS; INTERNATIONAL REPORT--BRITISH REGION

Newsstand Distribution All of us at Headquarters would like to ask you pastors to pass on to the brethren handling the newsstand circulation of "The Plain Truth" our appreciation for the tremendous amount of zeal and dedication shown in the distribution of the magazine. Please let them know that even though we temporarily must cut back in that area, we recognize their part in supporting Mr. Armstrong in fulfilling the great commission given this Work.

Visit Requests We want to make sure that all pastors understand our current policy on handling new visit request letters. Since this is a very critical area and a major responsibility for all the church pastors, we feel that further clarification and instruction is necessary. (Though some of the information in this article specifically applies only to the U.S. ministers, the overall principles apply to all.)

Visit request letters are separated into two categories indicated by the color of label placed on the outside of the envelope that is sent to the church pastors. The letters from individuals who are very new have a blue label attached to them. These people have been sent a letter giving them the name and telephone number of the pastor in their area and inviting them to call. Often these individuals do not call, but the opportunity is given to them anyway. (You also can follow up on these if you have time and a desire to do so.)

A red label is used for letters from individuals who have a stronger, long-standing interest. These individuals have received "The Plain Truth" for a year or more and are usually co-workers. They have received various pieces of our literature and their letters show a good understanding. The letter we send to these individuals contains the pastor's name and telephone number, but it also assures them that our minister will contact them.

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Some of you have mentioned that even certain of these "red label" people are still lacking in interest and are a waste of time to call. Several things should be considered in this regard. First, it is a judgment as to which requests are made red label and which blue label. We can make a mistake and accidentally classify someone as a red label who clearly

should have been a blue label. Or, a miscalculation could also have been made in judging the individual's level of interest. This is probably unavoidable in a certain percentage of cases because we have a very limited amount of information to go on. If you run into a letter like that, send it back to us after you have called the person.

Another factor to consider in evaluating the profitability of visit requests is that even some of our members do not have the level of enthusiasm and interest that we would like to see. So it shouldn't seem unusual to find brand new people without the commitment, direction and zeal that they need. Let us understand. Part of the pastor's job is to cultivate that interest and lay the groundwork for God to continue to work with them through the "World Tomorrow" telecast and the literature, if that is all they are ready for at this time.

If all they want to do is "chew the fat," as one minister mentioned, then be willing to pleasantly listen and gently direct the conversation along profitable lines. Be all things to all men.

Perhaps at this time the result may seem like a big zero; however, these people have shown enough interest to ask for several pieces of literature, to resubscribe to "The Plain Truth" one or more times, to give donations on more than one occasion and to write the letter that initiated the visit. Taking a few minutes to talk to them over the telephone or going to their homes for a visit does establish a very personal contact between that individual and the Church. We have to have faith that God's Word will prosper according to God's purpose. He may not desire to call that individual to be a member right now. The value may be for a later time. For example: That person undoubtedly has friends, relatives and other social/business contacts. The contact with you may result in a positive comment to someone else that would help that individual to come along toward the truth.

This leads to another area that has been troublesome to many. That is how to properly handle the situation when an individual only wants to receive the church address so that he can attend church. Obviously we can't invite new people to church without first working with them to bring them to the place where they are ready. At the same time we need to be careful not to cause offense or give the impression they aren't good enough or that we are a secretive group.

We are enclosing with this issue of the "Pastor General's Report" a copy of the text-library letter used by the Personal Correspondence Department in answering questions relating to why individuals aren't invited to church and can't attend services right away. Also enclosed are two sample letters based on the standard text showing how this material is tailored to fit specific situations. These will be of help to all you international ministers as well.

Please study these letters to glean from them the various approaches that should be used to explain properly to new individuals why they can't be invited to services. This material has been very successfully used by the men in PCD both in writing letters and talking to individuals over the telephone.

The main points we need to stress are these: The difference between God's Church and this world's churches, individuals in attendance need to be ready for the meat of God's Word that is preached in church, they need to prove whether this is God's Church first and they need to be willing to yield to God before they begin to attend church services.

Obviously some individuals will still be upset. However, as much as possible we need to avoid giving offense by striving to handle church attendance questions properly.

Please make it a very high priority to get in contact at least by telephone with all new individuals as soon as possible--within two or three days of having received their letters from us. Don't give the impression that we don't care by waiting a week or two before calling. As tenuous as it may seem, this is the fruit of a lot of effort that has gone before. We don't want to let it fall to the ground when it reaches us. We want to set a right example of common courtesy and concern as ministers of Jesus Christ, whether these individuals become members or not.

Deduction The "double tax deduction" will continue one more year. U.S. ministers who have owned and occupied their homes prior to January 3, 1983, will be permitted to continue to list the property taxes and mortgage interest as itemized deductions on their income-tax returns through the 1986 tax year. This is allowed even though these items were paid with the tax-free housing allowance. The Internal Revenue Service announced this summer that it would not apply the ruling that disallows this tax benefit to ministers until January 1, 1987. However, ministers who have purchased homes after January 3, 1983, are not eligible for this benefit.

**** TO BE READ IN ALL CHURCHES****

We have tentative plans to hold the Festival in China once again in 1986. We may be permitted to include English-speaking European Church members in this group, which was limited to North America the first year. We were able to add an Australian contingent in 1985, which was very successful.

Plans call for the group to assemble in Hong Kong for Atonement. From there the Festival group will embark on a 16-day tour of China including nine days in Nanjing for the Feast.

Any baptized member who is physically able to make this extensive trip from North America, Australia, England and Europe (English-speaking only) should submit names of all interested parties by December 15 to: Festival Office, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California 91129, U.S.A. Further details will be available early in 1986.

Over →

**** TO BE READ IN ALL CHURCHES ****

We have received word that the children of one family who attended the Feast site in Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania have contracted measles.

Therefore, any families that have attended the Mt. Pocono Feast site this last year should be alert to notice if their children exhibit any of the symptoms of measles.

The symptoms are as follows: "cough with cold-like symptoms, elevated temperature over 101 degrees, inflammation of eyelids, light sensitivity and white spots in the mouth. After about 3 days later, a brick-red irregular rash will break out."

If children do exhibit any such symptoms, parents should keep them home, from both school and church until such time as it can be definitely determined whether or not they have the measles.

International News

From Frank Brown In the United Kingdom and Eire "Plain Truth" circulation is on target at just under 150,000, bringing us back to the circulation level before the file was reduced by a major renewal program earlier this year. The "Good News" list is continuing to grow: The four "Good News"-offer mailing has brought in almost 44 percent response. As a result of these activities the total mail for the year is up 23.1 percent; mail income was also particularly good in September with a 35.8 percent increase, bringing the year-to-date total to 16.1 percent.

A number of ministerial relocations are taking place in the United Kingdom. Mr. David Bedford is moving from the Southwest of England to serve in the East Midland churches. The Southwest will now be served by Mr. David House, who moves from Southampton. Mr. Robin Jones, who has pastored London for almost 10 years, is handing over to Mr. Barry Bourne, who moves down from the Midlands area. Mr. Jones moves southward to pastor the Southampton area. The Cambridge church is saying goodbye to Mr. David Stirk, as he takes over the Basildon church. He will continue to serve in Luton. Mr. Melvin Rhodes, who has been assisting in the Southwest area, will now pastor West Midlands and South Wales. Finally, Mr. Edward Smith is moving back to the Headquarters area from Birmingham to assist in pastoring the St. Albans, Borehamwood and Luton churches.

The English-language "Plain Truth" lists in the continent of Europe and the Middle East are growing steadily. In Europe the list is up 3.5 percent this month to 35,537. In the Middle East phenomenal growth has been experienced with many thousands of letters arriving over the last few months from Iran. Mail from this area has obviously been delayed due to difficult conditions in that country, but now things seem freer. Naturally this unexpected growth is causing severe budgetary pressures and various adjustments are having to be made to stay within budget.

In Africa, demands for "The Plain Truth" are always high, and we have to put potential subscribers on a waiting list until the budget allows us to commence their subscriptions. Mail from the area is up 63.3 percent over last year. Unlike last year, however, literature is being mailed out from the local offices in Africa, whereas before it was mailed out from the U.K. The file size is almost 55,000.

As reported earlier, with Uganda in political turmoil, plans to hold the Festival in Jinja had to be canceled and members met in the home of Mr. William Othieno. It was in a rural setting and the young people enjoyed helping to draw water and collect firewood. Activities included a barbeque, football and volleyball, a hike and a talent show. Sermons were given by Mr. Ben Kaswaga, who traveled from Nairobi, and sermon tapes were also played. Thank you for your prayers for our brethren there.

--Joseph Tkach, Church Administration

FROM EDITORIAL SERVICES

NEW FORMAT; INVITATION; MILESTONE; DECEMBER GN;
BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS; SOFTBOUND VERSION

New Format With the reduction of the English-language "Plain Truths" to 32 pages, beginning in March, and the other belt-tightening tactics we are taking in the publications, we are having to regear our thinking in Editorial. With fewer articles, it is more important than ever that they appeal to a general audience--and, of course, now most articles in the magazine will appear in the international editions.

Invitation In early December leaders from seven South Asian nations will meet in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to form a socioeconomic bloc to promote peace and stability in their troubled region. Mr. Armstrong was invited to address this South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC) summit conference. As you no doubt noticed in Mr. Armstrong's lectures to the people of Sri Lanka, these people listen to what he says. Unfortunately, because of health reasons, he was forced to decline.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, King Birendra of Nepal, King Jigme Singy Wangchuck of Bhutan and President Ershad of Bangladesh, along with the leaders of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, jointly represent one fifth of all mankind. With these kinds of doors opening for God's Work, you can see how much more we need to fervently pray for Mr. Armstrong's quick recovery.

We plan to send Keith Stump, a "Plain Truth" senior writer, to cover the conference for "The Plain Truth" and to make a survey of conditions in poverty-stricken Bangladesh. Mr. Stump is lecturer in Eurasian Geography at Ambassador College and has a thorough background in Islamic history and culture.

Milestone One milestone we are excited about in the publications is the interface of our NCR word processing system with Publishing's Bedford typesetting computer. This interface is the fulfillment of a goal we, with the aid and encouragement of Data Processing, have worked toward for several years now.

The NCR system is established as the primary word processing system here at Headquarters. With this interface, any material we receive from any of the NCR systems can be directly input into the Bedford system without the need of retyping. This will save nearly half a million keystrokes monthly. Just another example of how God is using modern technology to get the Gospel message out.

December GN No cutbacks in "Good News" circulation are planned. The December issue will reach more than 730,000 subscribers. Even though the majority of the readers are nonmembers now, "The Good News" is stronger doctrinally than ever. Mr. Armstrong has remarked that even the newest readers should know what kind of magazine they are requesting, and that we shouldn't hold back or water down anything in "Good News" articles.

Birth Announcements The Church is growing! Now that "The Worldwide News" has completed the Festival edition, the staff is wrapping up the Nov. 18 issue. More than 100 birth announcements that accumulated over the Feast break will be published in that issue.

Softbound Version Advance copies of the softbound version of Mr. Armstrong's "Mystery of the Ages" are in. They have retained the beautiful royal purple with the gold embossed title from the jacket cover of the hardback book. As one of our staff mentioned, it is the best quality softback book we have seen.

--Dexter Faulkner, Editorial Services

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE UPDATE

ENVOY; GRADUATES; COLLEGE CATALOGS; PRAYERS;

Envoy Since returning from the Feast of Tabernacles, the faculty and administration are back in "full swing." I am happy to report that, in every way, we have had a very fine college year thus far.

It is encouraging to see how many brethren have wanted to buy a copy of the new 1985 "Envoy." Mr. Dennis Robertson, Director of College Publications, just recently informed me that during the Feast we received about 3,000 "Envoy" orders from U.S. Feast sites, plus a number from the overseas area. This is about 1,000 more than we anticipated receiving. Since the College only printed about 2,000 copies, we will have to order another 3,000 so we can accommodate all of those who want a copy of the 1985 "Envoy."

We have received many favorable comments concerning the new "Envoy." It is the second largest "Envoy" we have ever published. And though it doesn't have quite as many color pages as some previous "Envoys," it does have some very interesting pictures (both in color and black-and-white), plus other points of interest.

If any of you ministers did not get your copy of the new 1985 "Envoy," then please let us know right away, so we can include you (or any others you know of who wish a copy) along with the count that we will be giving to our publisher in the near future.

Graduates You will be happy to know that, again this year, we employed a sizable group of the May, 1985, graduates directly in the Work of God. As you know, the College was founded for the express purpose of training young men and women to serve in this ever-growing Work.

The following figures reveal how God's college is fulfilling that important purpose: God's Work hired 71 students from the 1983 graduating class; 89 students were hired from the 1984 graduates; the Work also hired 61 B.A. graduates plus 12 A.A. graduates--making a total of 73 graduates--from the May, 1985, class.

This news should be very encouraging. It shows that God's college continues to train its students for service in God's Work. Besides, those who are not employed by the Work immediately after graduation are able to go out into the local church areas and better represent the great God and His way of life as a result of being trained by God's ministers at Ambassador College.

College Catalogs The 1986-87 editions of the Ambassador College catalogs (Pasadena and Big Sandy) are now available. We are mailing copies of each to all full-time ministers. Local church elders, as well as others who might need one (or both), may request them from the respective Admissions Offices.

Prayers Once again I ask for your continued prayers for Ambassador College that we may continue to produce abundant fruit. It is a great privilege to be able to continue serving in God's college along with the many other dedicated ministers and faculty members.

And, it is a blessing for us in Pasadena to serve at the very Headquarters of God's Work. It is also a great joy to be part of the team which God has put together to assist His apostle at His Headquarters situated on this beautiful campus.

--Raymond F. McNair, Deputy Chancellor

FROM FACILITIES ADMINISTRATION

SUCCESSFUL FEAST; COOPERATION THE KEY; PREPARING FOR 1986

Successful Feast The outstanding success of the 1985 Feast of Tabernacles has literally been reported from the "four corners of the earth." I certainly add my voice in support of these reports.

In addition to our own reports, there are many glowing reports from public officials and business people from around the world expressing appreciation for church members and their exemplary attitude. Their experiences with members is certainly a marked contrast to dealing with the general public.

Cooperation the Key While still savoring the success of the 1985 Festival, the staff is busily preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles 1986. Housing negotiations are underway even now at the various sites.

With the church membership continuing to grow, we will probably be at or near the 100,000 mark in attendance next year in the United States alone. This has a dramatic impact on housing in any given area. Therefore, we must be continuing to improve our organization of housing arrangements and every facet of the Festival operation. Everything must work more and more smoothly with ever greater cooperation by the membership.

Preparing for 1986 There are few items that Mr. Tkach and I have discussed that will be helpful in preparing our members for the Festival in 1986.

1. Housing continues to be a major area in which members need to be instructed to comply.
 - o Members should not make housing arrangements until the planner is published. Otherwise, we have no control over the usage of housing establishments and thereby the rates. This can even affect our ability to continue to use a Festival site.
 - o If a person is improperly treated for any reason by a housing establishment, this should be brought to the attention of the Festival Advisor or Housing Officer and noted on the questionnaire handed out near the end of the Feast. These are our means of solving housing problems. We evaluate the comments on the questionnaires thoroughly seeking out the problems that need to be resolved.
2. Members should be instructed in saving second tithe, the use of it, and the necessity of the Festival tithe to provide for the needy, the ministers and the operation of the sites.
3. Although many church members transfer to other Festival sites at will, it may be necessary to work out a rotation by which some stay at their assigned site periodically to fill positions of responsibility. In Pasadena, because of operating this facility as a Festival site, we normally require employees to remain in their jobs approximately one out of three years. This rotates the responsibility, but still makes it possible to effectively conduct the Feast. Each pastor must, of course, assess his own needs to fulfill church responsibilities.
4. We have to be concerned about customs in this society. Tipping is a part of the cost of service provided. In a few cases, some members have not tipped for whatever reason. This is noted by some as indicative of the church's attitude. People should be instructed that it is appropriate to tip and in cases of exceptional service one should give more than the 15%.
5. Traveler's checks should be encouraged, especially where people are carrying more than \$300 or \$400. In one hotel everyone was paying the entire cost of the eight-day period in \$100 bills. Some establishments are not equipped to keep safely this much cash. A worse problem is for one to be observed carrying large sums of cash. It makes us vulnerable to assaults, burglaries and robberies. It just isn't prudent in this society to carry large sums of money.

There are probably other items that should be covered but these are some of the major areas. We appreciate your assistance in helping to make the Festival operation smoother with each passing year.

--Ellis La Ravia, Facilities Administration

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Newsstand Outlets Service New York Commuters In early August "Plain Truth" newsstand magazine displays were installed in 59 New York subway and Long Island commuter stations. Every day, hundreds of thousands of commuters frequent these stations. They will now have an opportunity to become acquainted with the "Plain Truth" magazine. Over 30,000 "Plain Truth" magazines per month are expected to be distributed by this program.

"Mystery of the Ages" Book Update In addition to the positive response of God's Church to the "Mystery of the Ages" book, we are now receiving book reviews in certain magazines and newspapers.

The prestigious LIBRARY JOURNAL recently recommended the book for both "public and religious collections." Public and school librarians refer to recommendations in LIBRARY JOURNAL as a guide to determining which books to purchase. Every year over 40,000 new book titles are printed in the U.S., but less than one in 10 receive reviews. Sales of Mr. Armstrong's book have reached what our New York publisher described as "good sales for a hardcover religious book" in nonreligious bookstores.

Some of the leading chain stores now carry the book for sale. The local Waldenbooks store in the Pasadena mall is featuring a large wall display highlighting Mr. Armstrong's book alongside James Michener's latest novel TEXAS.

Mr. Armstrong has now received wide media exposure as a renowned book author. Inquiries have been received from other publishers who desire to know whether the book would be available for commercial paperback distribution or foreign-language translation and distribution.

--Ray Wright, Publishing Services

MAIL PROCESSING UPDATE

BOOK OFFER; COMMENTS; MAIL HEAVY; BIG SANDY MILESTONE

Book Offer Mr. Armstrong's offer of "Mystery of the Ages" to "Good News" subscribers is bringing in an outstanding response! In 10 days we have received 96,721 letters--a 20.1 percent return. (The letter was sent to 480,000 people in all.)

The highest response for any previous letter for the same number of days was 9.2 percent, when the book "Tomorrow . . . What It Will Be Like" was offered six years ago. Thus, the response to "Mystery of the Ages" is more than twice as high. It is too early to accurately project how many requests we will receive. However, we expect it to be over 40 percent.

Comments We have received hundreds of letters from co-workers thanking Mr. Armstrong for sending them his book. They felt honored to receive this invaluable gift. Many members have also written to express their deep personal thanks for what they describe as the most inspiring and important piece of literature Mr. Armstrong has ever written.

Following are a few brief comments:

"How excited I am to hear about the book you are working on! It is something the world is sadly in need of to complement the Bible. It will fill a big void."

New Mexico

"Your book is the best, most helpful, inspiring book I've read, apart from the Bible. It fills in the gap of 'here a little, there a little.'"

Pennsylvania

"I wish to tell you how much I enjoyed 'Mystery of the Ages.' It's as if Mr. Armstrong put everything I've been taught since I came into the Church into that book."

Pennsylvania

"The book was so interesting that I finished reading it the second day I had it, and I am starting to read it a second time."

Florida

Mail Heavy Most of the mail backlog (500,000 pieces) that accumulated during the Feast has been processed. Although our workload is generally back to normal, we continue to see a 25 percent increase in mail. We have received over five million pieces so far this year--one million more than for the same period last year. Most of this increase can be attributed to the growth in circulation of "The Plain Truth" and "The Good News."

Big Sandy Milestone In just 19 months of operation, the Big Sandy WATS area has taken 500,000 calls. The total number of phone calls answered at both Pasadena and Big Sandy in that period was 1.5 million. The Texas operation now answers about 40 percent of each weekend's response.

In between calls, the Big Sandy WATS staff also helps us to process a portion of the routine mail received in Pasadena. This year alone, they have handled 500,000 pieces of mail and saved the Work considerable money in wages. Without the help of Big Sandy, we would find it extremely difficult to keep pace with the burgeoning growth we're experiencing.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center