

# PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE  
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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## FROM THE PASTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE

The following letter from Mr. Herbert Armstrong was mailed to all members on December 9, 1985.

December 9, 1985

Dear Brethren:

At this time I feel I must make a statement regarding my own physical condition and also changes being made in the Work. I have delayed a definite statement about my health hoping that my physical condition would improve and that the statement I now make could be alleviated.

Last August 3, I left Pasadena for Orr, Minnesota, having planned to continue to the Summer Educational Program camp in Scotland, then to London, and from London across the North Pole to Tokyo. A trip had been planned from Tokyo to Seoul, South Korea, to meet with their president. I was to be accompanied by the Japanese Minister of Labor, Toshio Yamaguchi. I had become ill and was forced to return to Pasadena from Orr, Minnesota, early in the morning, too ill to be fully dressed. I returned immediately to my home. I was able to make a few trips to the office until the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles in late September. I have not been outside of my home since that day. From that date, my regular physician has been making daily, and sometimes twice daily, trips to my home.

I had hoped for a turn to the better so that I could return for daily work in my office and a recovery from this illness, but unfortunately, that has not occurred. My blood level is far below normal and has left me in a very weak condition. I have not been able to dress further than bed clothes and robes since the day before the Feast of Tabernacles.

My physician says that with blood transfusions I could go to the office for three to four weeks. But then another blood transfusion would be necessary. It is my judgment that such a transfusion would be risky and of very short duration. And my physician acquiesces in this decision. Frequently I have very serious and painful angina attacks of the heart. I have been able to make certain necessary decisions in brief telephone contact with those at the office and will continue this as and when my very limited physical strength permits.

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Until the present moment I felt that God might provide a way for complete recovery, and He still may. So I have withheld this statement until now, but I feel it is better that you all know the condition. I am now in

my 94th year. God may grant that I continue in this very limited manner to direct the Work for some time, but the occasional severe heart pains that I have endured have made me feel the necessity of letting the entire membership know of the condition as it is.

Also, I feel God has led me in deciding that it is necessary that we close the operations at Big Sandy, Texas, after the end of this present school year. The certification of the college requiring the pursuing of accreditation, the financial needs of the first commission of the Church and the needs of the ministry made this decision necessary. The trained ministry at the campus in Big Sandy are sorely needed elsewhere because of the thousands of prospective [misspelled in the member letter as "perspective" in transcribing the dictated text] member visit requests. I have ordered implementation of this decision to the appropriate officials involved.

Remember, brethren, this is the Work of the living Creator God. We are now very near the end of this present age. I will continue to give my all to the Work of God up to the last breath. I hope you will all realize the seriousness of the time in which we live and that nothing is important any longer other than to be close to God and assured of a place in His very soon coming Kingdom.

This world is not God's world, and of that we may all be thankful. It is now in its very last days. This illness has impressed heavily on my mind, more than ever before, the uselessness of this present evil world. Thank God we are all very near to its end. I thank you, beyond words to express, for your loving concern and for the many thousands of cards and well wishes that have been coming in from great numbers of you from all over the world.

With all my love,  
In the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior,  
Herbert W. Armstrong

P.S. I have had to dictate this letter due to lack of the physical strength to type it.

[Pastors please note: Mr. Armstrong has also mailed the above letter in significantly revised form as a co-worker letter. Please mention to your congregation(s) that though the co-worker letter is similar, it should be read carefully by all.]

#### FROM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

#### NEW LETTERS; FLOODING; PRAYER REQUESTED

**New Letters** To give additional assistance to the ministry in handling questions about Church attendance from new contacts, two new letters have been prepared for use by the Personal Correspondence Department.

These new letters will explain the Church teaching about attending services to those who specifically inquire about it. They will be used in the United States immediately and will be available for use by the

Regional Offices as needs and circumstances warrant. These letters should help to take some of the pressure off the ministry of having to disappoint those new contacts who wish to attend services before they are ready.

Having received this information up front, these people will know that you are not simply going to give them the time and location of services. They may be more apt to want to discuss proving the doctrines of the Church and preparing themselves to attend services.

Copies of both are included with this issue of the "Pastor General's Report" so that you can familiarize yourself with them. One letter is intended for "blue labels" and one, for "red labels." (See "Pastor General's Report," November 15, 1985, for explanation of the use of red and blue labels.)

**Flooding** When we hear or read in the news of natural disasters such as severe flooding, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, etc., do our thoughts immediately turn to asking God's protection for His people who might be affected? Pastors can set the example by staying attuned to such occurrences, and reminding the brethren during services to pray for one another. (Sometimes I think a pastor can underestimate the power of his personal example in teaching the congregation. Those matters that you focus upon, that you mention or that you show interest in or concern about are obvious to the congregation. Never forget that people are convinced more by what you do than by what you say. You can tell people all day what they should do. But when you set the example for them by the kind of interest and enthusiasm you display, you have taught them much more. That is another reason your example must be one that reflects the godly love of the mind of Jesus Christ.)

But on the subject of natural disasters, I know God's people in West Virginia appreciated the prayers of their brethren during the recent floods. I thought you would be interested in excerpts from a report by Mr. Steve Schantz, pastor of the Clarksburg, West Virginia, congregation.

God was certainly watching over the two families most seriously affected by the flooding in the Parsons, WV area. There is very little left of the small town that wasn't damaged or destroyed. One member lost her home and everything in it. The waters rose so rapidly that people in the community only had time to evacuate without their belongings. At this moment, the member and her husband, not a member, have already relocated in a home above the flood plain. She mentioned that they are much happier in their new location and that they have been very well taken care of by way of basic needs.

Another family also survived the flooding in Parsons that washed away their immediate neighbor's home right before their eyes, while they themselves took refuge in the second story of their home. The members and their children carried many household items up the stairs to safety. When the flooding came suddenly to their property, all access routes were already blocked and they were trapped inside.

They spent the night praying for God's protection for themselves as well as their neighbors. God certainly heard those prayers because by the time the flood waters started receding the next morning their home was one of the only ones left standing on the block! At present they are staying with relatives and waiting for due process of their application for financial assistance to rebuild or refurbish their home. The long-term effects of the flood's devastation of local economies will probably result in more unemployment and underemployment. We have been very blessed here in that most of the men who were out of work a year ago are employed again! I believe the effect of this recent trial will be unifying for God's people here. I see the need for us to be more "family minded" in terms of being our brother's keeper, and recent events are bringing this need to our attention. Thank you for your concern and prayers.

**Prayer Requested** I'd like to ask that each of you pray for Jennifer Robertson, 9-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Robertson. Mr. Robertson is a faculty member of Ambassador College in Pasadena. Jennifer has undergone this past Tuesday, December 10, a very serious operation to remove a tumor that was exerting extreme pressure on her optic nerve and her pituitary gland. The brethren in Pasadena were asked to pray for a successful outcome, due to the potential of the difficult operation itself resulting in partial or total blindness, or even death. As it turned out, although Jennifer seems to be recovering well from the surgery, the part of the tumor that was resting directly on the optic nerve was left, as it could not be removed without causing total blindness. However, she has lost all vision in her left eye. The doctors are now running tests to determine whether the tumor is malignant. Please remember the Robertsons in this extremely difficult trial.

Thank you for your continuing prayers for Mr. Armstrong. As he mentions in the member letter, God certainly does have the power to raise him up and heal him totally. Let's continue praying to that end. Let's also remember to pray for a smooth and orderly transition with God's blessing for all those affected by the closure of the college in Big Sandy.

--Joseph Tkach, Church Administration

#### MEDIA PURCHASING UPDATE

**ITALIAN DIRECT MAIL; NEW TIME PERIODS FOR U.S. T.V.**

**Italian Direct Mail** A direct mail shot in Italy is planned for late January or early February of next year. The mailing, which will offer a free one-year subscription to "La Pura Verità," the Italian version of "The Plain Truth," will go to about 100,000 households. The four to five thousand new subscribers it is expected to add to the magazine will maintain the circulation at its current level of about 80,000.

**New Time Periods for U.S. T.V.** We recently added second airing times for "The World Tomorrow" program on WOR and WTBS, two of the largest U.S. cable television stations. The new times are proving to be remarkably effective additions.



WOR, which originates in New Jersey, now airs the program on Sundays at 11:30 a.m. (EST) as well as at the old time of 11:00 p.m. (EST). The new time has already surpassed the old time as No. 1 in the country, drawing as many as 1,800 responses for a single airing.

Atlanta's WTBS also airs the program a second time, at 1:05 a.m. (EST), Monday. That's 10:05 p.m., Sunday, on the West Coast. The old time of 6:30 a.m. (EST), Sunday, still ranks in the top 10, but it, too, has been surpassed. The new time is consistently drawing the third- or fourth-highest response in the country each weekend. It has drawn as many as 1,400 calls for a single airing.

--David Hulme, Media Purchasing

MEDIA SERVICES UPDATE

Greetings once again from Media Services--Radio and Television. 1985 has been a year of inspiring growth not only in the number of stations that are airing the "World Tomorrow" program worldwide, but also in the response for booklets and personal visits. We in Media Services would like to share with all of you some of the worldwide statistics that were given to the Regional Directors at the November conference.

Three separate half-hour "World Tomorrow" television programs are subtitled in French, Italian and Norwegian. These programs are identical to the English "World Tomorrow" program with the exception of adding subtitles at the bottom of the picture. After Mr. Armstrong introduces the booklet(s) and "The Plain Truth" at the end of the program, we have an announcer in each foreign language offer the booklet(s), and also go through the articles in the latest French/Italian/Norwegian edition of "The Plain Truth."

Complete Television Statistics

<b>Stations Airing English Program</b>		<b>Stations Airing Subtitled Programs</b>	
Total U.S.	250	French Subtitle	4
Canadian TV	37	Italian Subtitle	3
(Including network breakdown)		Norwegian Subtitle	<u>1</u>
Australian TV	23	Total	8
(Main stations only)			
Caribbean TV	9		
Philippine TV	7		
(GMA network)			
South Pacific TV	2		
(Guam, Tonga)			
Asian TV	2		
(Sri Lanka, Japan)			
Central American TV	1		
(Belize)			
	<hr/>		
Total	331	Grand Total	<u>339</u>

As you have read in the updates by Mr. Apartian and Mr. Rice in the last "Pastor General's Report," God is certainly blessing Mr. Armstrong's efforts on the "World Tomorrow" program as a witness and a warning to this end-time generation. Mr. Rice explained how the "Plain Truth About Christmas" program set an all-time new record for a weekend response of 26,020 calls. As Mr. Apartian described it, the French-subtitled program is having "a synergistic effect" in all French areas where it has been airing. Mr. Catherwood's future report on the Italian Work will also show God's tremendous blessings with the Italian-subtitled program.

But God's great Work is not yet completed. The continued growth for 1985 should encourage us to pray more earnestly for God's continued blessings upon Mr. Armstrong and the worldwide impact of the "World Tomorrow" program upon the lives of people watching it.

--Larry Omasta, Media Services

### ON THE WORLD SCENE

**THE SUN SETS DEEPER; CHUNNEL GO-AHEAD NEAR; ULSTER--WARNINGS MOUNT; SANCTUARY MOVEMENT SPREADS; TEEN PREGNANCY EPIDEMIC**

**The Sun Sets Deeper** During 1985, something once thought impossible occurred: Italy bypassed Great Britain in its standard of living. By 1995, both Spain and Communist East Germany will overtake the U.K., if present trends hold. In a recent speech, Prince Charles warned that Britain could end up as a fourth-rate country unless there is a dramatic change in the public attitude toward work and wealth. He said he detected a deep-seated cultural refusal to face plain economic facts. And, true to pattern, the Prince was afterwards attacked in some circles for drawing positive attention to America's recent economic record (the United States has created 13.3 million more jobs in the past 14 years). But his defenders came to his side quickly. "Charles is right--and we'd better listen," headlined the Dec. 3 LONDON STANDARD. And shortly before, in the Nov. 27 DAILY MAIL, journalist Linda Lee-Potter wrote a blistering column entitled "This Land of the Lax and Lazy":

At times it seems Britain will have to be bankrupt, wrecked and on its knees before any of us stand up and say that we are on a collision course to wrecking our country's economy, independence, strength and morality. We've been brainwashed into believing, in today's Britain, that if you're unemployed you're always 'a victim,' if you're on strike you're always 'a hero,' if you're black you're always oppressed....

If you're an 'unmarried' mother with four illegitimate children you get a free flat, a salary and nobody asks, 'Don't you think your behaviour is irresponsible?' But if you speak the truth...they'll try to destroy you. The paternalistic state has reared a country of scroungers and the workshy who manipulate the system while those genuinely in need and defenceless usually get kicked in the teeth....

In a Sunday newspaper actress Shirley Cheriton described how she watched her performance in [a movie theater] with her 3-year-old son who said, 'Why are you in bed with that man

without any clothes on, Mummy?' Didn't it cross her tiny mind that it wasn't a scene a small child should have been watching at 7 o'clock at night, let alone when it concerned his own mother? On Monday morning the pop presenter on TV-am merrily introduced a new video saying that it showed a group called Blancmange systematically destroying a house. We then saw white-faced young men singing what will no doubt be a hit song as they smashed a jug of flowers against a mirror, wrecked a room, threw a turkey against a wall. That's called light entertainment!...

This is just a random selection of events that have become commonplace in the Britain of today and we're in danger of becoming so anaesthetised we're no longer shocked, and God help us if we're not....

Meanwhile, Britain's politically active clergy make pronouncements about social policies and economic issues (much the same as the Roman Catholic bishops in the United States). Their clerical views are decidedly leftist--more government funding, welfare, income redistribution. But as the DAILY TELEGRAPH'S Paul Johnson (one of Britain's best journalists) wrote, Britain's bishops do not expose the sinful causes of the wretched social conditions that prevail. Here are excerpts of his article "The Wages of Sin," which appeared in the May 11, 1985, issue:

One of the curious things about our very verbal political bishops is that they appear to have absolutely no sense of Christian priorities. That is, they pronounce constantly on matters which are not really of immediate concern to the episcopate, such as the details of economic policy, while remaining totally silent on issues which are, or certainly ought to be, their particular province.... Yet bishops, if they would only stick to their fundamental and traditional role as custodians of morality, have an important part to play in reducing economic hardship. In both the United States and Britain, the biggest single cause of poverty is the one-parent family. It is far more important and pervasive in its effects than unemployment....

This gigantic social evil, probably the biggest and most intractable social evil we face today, is itself a direct product of moral evil. These children of teenage girls are born as a result of fornication. The circumstances in which they are conceived and grow up, which make it extremely unlikely that they will become useful members of society, and more than likely that they will lead lives of deprivation and misery, with little education, tenuous and vulnerable employment or no jobs at all and a strong possibility that they will become criminals or drug addicts or both, are the consequence of the defiance of moral laws and contempt for the institution of marriage.

Now here is an obvious instance where the churches, and the bishops in particular, ought to be exerting all their energies and eloquence to hammer home Christian teaching, which is directly relevant to this problem. After all, the avoidance of

sexual sin, the centrality and sanctity of Christian marriage, are basic to the moral theology of all our churches. Yet oddly enough it is a long time since I have heard any clergyman, let alone a bishop, preach a sermon on the evils of fornication. You can listen to them denouncing the sins of Mr. Reagan in Latin America any Sunday. But the more elementary and deadly sins of the flesh nearer home--the sins that lie at the root of our problem of poverty--remain uncastigated....

What an eloquent description of the "shepherds of Israel" described in the 34th chapter of Ezekiel!

**Chunnel Go-Ahead Near** Britain's sluggish economic picture is responsible in large measure for two recent decisions. First, the British government has agreed to jump aboard the bandwagon of President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. The SDI program is expected to bring about a \$1,000,000,000 boost to British industry--no mean amount considering the declining price of oil. North Sea oil sales have kept Britain solvent for years, but the world market is soft and further price cuts are expected.

Secondly, the British and the French are edging ever closer to a final favorable decision--expected next month--on a joint, privately financed project to build a fixed link across the English Channel. On December 5, a parliamentary committee voted its approval on the design. As many expected, they came out in favor of a \$3,300,000,000 twin-rail tunnel under the Channel. (Another favorite had been a more costly bridge-tunnel, road-and-rail scheme.)

If approved, builders could start construction as early as mid-1987 and finish in the 1990s. The prospects of 50,000 additional jobs in Britain during the construction phase and at least 8,000 maintenance jobs thereafter look good to government economists. But as this column has brought out several times in the past, the "Chunnel" would at last breach Britain's "moat"--a prospect older Britons are leery of.

**Ulster--Warnings Mount** A SUNDAY TIMES (London) poll indicates that three-quarters of Northern Ireland's Protestants would vote against the recent Anglo-Irish agreement if a referendum were held on the deal. About 65 percent of Ulster's Roman Catholic minority favor the deal, which gives the Republic of Ireland a first-ever advisory role in the British province. The agreement is a big gamble. The hope is that, with Dublin on the scene in the North, moderate political forces among the minority Catholics will be strengthened, defanging the extremists of the Irish Republican Army. But the IRA is too clever for this. It will probably step up violence, alarming the Protestants, who will turn against the treaty--and the British government--with a vengeance. Ultimately British forces may just pull out--the IRA's aim--saying they cannot control the situation. Then the real fighting will begin. In the Nov. 24 DAILY TELEGRAPH, Peregrine Worsthorpe draws a scenario that presents a bleak picture indeed:

All will depend on how well the agreement works out in the crucial matter of defeating the IRA. Here, I fear, there are dreadful grounds for doubt. Almost certainly, within the next few weeks or months, there will be a spectacular IRA atrocity,



one designed to arouse the maximum Protestant outrage.... Inherent in this new agreement, therefore, are developments which Mrs. Thatcher and her colleagues must know will, sooner or later, provoke Protestant resistance; in all probability violent resistance.

A decade or so ago such a probability would have been enough to deter any British government from embarking on such a policy, since the idea of having to suppress a Protestant rebellion would have been quite unthinkable, particularly to good Tories. It is no longer unthinkable.... As for the keepers of Britain's liberal conscience, who in the past have always started to get uneasy whenever tough measures--internment, say--are used against the IRA, that high-principled lot would cause no trouble at all so long as any proposed breaches of civil rights applied only to the hated Paisleyite reactionaries [followers of Protestant leader and minister Ian Paisley].

Nor would there be a squeak of protest from the United States if the British Army were to get rough with the Protestants. Quite the opposite: Mrs. Thatcher would be acclaimed from coast to coast, much more universally than she was when she sent in crack troops to deal with General Galtieri [of Argentina in the Falklands war]....

Britain might have no choice but to get out. Again, a decade ago such a denouement--scuttle, in plain English--would have seemed inconceivable, too humiliating for words. Today, at home and abroad, it would be eulogised as an act of statesmanship, as was de Gaulle's extrication of France from Algeria.... For Ulster is no longer felt by most British people to be an integral part of the United Kingdom, loss of which would be a fatal deprivation.

In the March 19, 1982, "Pastor General's Report," we printed excerpts from an article in the December, 1981, HARPER'S MAGAZINE by Conor Cruise O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien, a former Irish and U.N. diplomat and then (and now) British journalist, warned of dire consequences in Northern Ireland should the Ulster Protestants feel betrayed by the government in London. An ultimate British pullout would in fact lead, he said, to a Protestant declaration of independence and a bloody civil war leading to the dissolution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Mr. O'Brien continues to warn of such future developments, as he reported in a column he wrote in the Nov. 26 TIMES of London:

I think I understand how the government of the Republic [of Ireland] got into this ill-omened agreement:... The motivation of [Irish Prime Minister] Garret FitzGerald's government is honourable.... He has shown courage and altruism of an exceptionally high order, but I wish he had shown a bit more sense.... The Dublin government has no experience of governing Northern Ireland, and its illusions are relatively pardonable. But what about the UK government, which does have such experience, and which ought not to have such illusions?...

There must be, at least, very deep misgivings among officials with experience of Northern Ireland about all this. But I wonder whether certain officials, and perhaps also certain politicians, do not already discern a possible silver lining to the gathering clouds. "Silver lining" thinking, which could never be publicly avowed, might run more or less like this: "Maybe this thing will work, and the Unionists will simmer down, having let off steam. If so, fine. But maybe they will not settle down. Maybe they'll keep on raising hell, so that we can no longer really govern the place. But might not that outcome be quite good, too? It could give us the opportunity to get rid of Northern Ireland once and for all, in a way that would be fully understandable to public opinion."...

In a book called States of Ireland, published in 1972, I contemplated a "benign scenario" and a "malign scenario" for the future of Northern Ireland.... The benign scenario is...not under way. The "malign scenario" runs as follows: Britain finds that it cannot defeat the IRA and its allies. So, having registered the hostility of the great majority of the population of Northern Ireland, Britain decides to withdraw. The withdrawal is followed by the Protestants setting up an independent government. This precipitates savage fighting between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, followed by intervention by the Republic and civil war involving all Ireland. I am afraid we now appear to be moving, rather fast, towards the fulfillment of the "malign scenario." The potential for its fulfillment was always implicit in the sustained effort to move a million Ulster Protestants in the direction in which they refuse to move: a united Ireland.

**Sanctuary Movement Spreads** Cities across the United States, under pressure from liberal and minority activist groups, are declaring themselves as sanctuaries for illegal aliens. The trend is sure to speed up the influx of illegals already pouring into the country. Los Angeles became the biggest city to do so when, on November 27, its city council voted 8 to 6 to declare itself a sanctuary city. The resolution instructs city employees not to voluntarily assist the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in finding and deporting illegal aliens. Police are instructed not to arrest or detain an illegal merely for being in the country. Police cannot even notify the INS of the whereabouts of an illegal unless he or she has been booked for a felony offense or multiple misdemeanors.

The INS is frustrated and furious at the growing sanctuary movement, which is also fueled by liberal activist ministers turning their churches into sanctuaries. However, the motive behind both the municipal and church policies is clearly political and intended as a slap against the Reagan Administration's Central American policy. The L.A. resolution singles out refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador, two countries whose governments are supported by the U.S. and who face communist-supported insurgencies. The INS has clear provisions for accepting people who can prove that their return would be dangerous to their lives--but such approval is rare since most "political refugees" really aren't so: They leave for economic reasons, not political persecution.

A vocal critic of the movement is Harold Ezell, Western regional director of the INS. The outspoken Mr. Ezell, a former business executive, has been conducting an aggressive but losing battle against illegal aliens. Ezell was in the L.A. City Council chambers when the vote was taken. "This is going to send a message to all of South America and all of the other countries that if you can get here, pay whatever you got to pay, then you're O.K.... It's an absolute mistake for the city of Los Angeles. I think we have [a situation] tantamount to a city council trying to be their own immigration and naturalization service." One of the city councilmen accused Ezell of "fanning the flame of prejudice and hysteria." (The same councilman has railed against "hysteria" in the AIDS crisis, too.)

Ezell's offices have been aggressive at rounding up illegals. He has even gone after illegals who win primary rounds in California's State Lottery and who appear on the Lottery's "big spin" TV programs (where first-round winners spin a wheel for bigger prizes). It's amazing how many contestants speak only Spanish and need interpreters on the program. Says the beleaguered INS executive: "If we can get mad about drunk drivers, why can't we get mad about regaining our borders? The reason why you have control of immigration is that you can assimilate a certain number of people every year into your culture, into the American way, into America, America's life-style. If you flood or you overdose your culture or your society then you have chaos, you don't have a culture anymore.... In my opinion, illegal immigration will destroy what we know as a free society in the next five to 10 years...."

**Teen Pregnancy Epidemic** Los Angeles is leading the way in another field, too. The Los Angeles school board recently voted 6 to 1 to establish a model high school health clinic that will offer birth control information and contraceptives. The board also specified that students who seek birth control information and devices at the clinic must obtain "full and informed" parental consent, although it was unclear whether the school district has the legal right to make the consent mandatory. Casting the lone vote against the clinic was board member David Armor, who said it would only encourage teenagers to engage in premarital sex and exacerbate already high rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The December 9 issue of TIME magazine featured as its cover story the article "Children Having Children." Here are just a few excerpts (you may wish to obtain a photocopy of the article at your library):

If present trends continue, researchers estimate, fully 40 percent of today's 14-year-old girls will be pregnant at least once before the age of 20.... Chicago's DuSable High School..., which serves one of the nation's poorest neighborhoods, is battling a veritable epidemic: each year about one-third of its 1,000 female students are pregnant....

Teen pregnancy imposes lasting hardships on two generations: parent and child. Teen mothers are, for instance, many times as likely as other women with young children to live below the poverty level.... As infants, the offspring of teen mothers have high rates of illness and mortality. Later in life, they often experience educational and emotional problems.... With disadvantage creating disadvantage, it is no wonder that teen

pregnancy is widely viewed as the very hub of the U.S. poverty cycle....

Among the underclass in America's urban ghettos, the trends are especially disturbing. Nearly half of black females in the U.S. are pregnant by age 20. The pregnancy rate among those ages 15 to 19 is almost twice what it is among whites. Worse still, nearly 90 percent of the babies born to blacks in this age group are born out of wedlock; most are raised in fatherless homes with little economic opportunity. "When you look at the numbers, teenage pregnancies are of cosmic danger to the black community," declares Eleanor Holmes Norton, law professor at Georgetown University and a leading black scholar....

Unwed motherhood may even seem glamorous to impressionable teens. "They see Jerry Hall on TV, flinging back her hair, talking about having Mick Jagger's second [out-of-wedlock] child and saying what a wonderful life she has," bristles Daphne Busby of Brooklyn, founder of the Sisterhood of Black Single Mothers.... Social workers are almost unanimous in citing the influence of the popular media--television, rock music, videos, movies--in propelling the trend toward precocious sexuality....

Again, where are the church leaders' condemnations of the sin of fornication?

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau