

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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REPORT FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Here is good financial news!

After struggling unsuccessfully most of the year to meet our income budget projections of 12 percent increase, December ended considerably above budget. We had a low in April of only a 3 percent increase, and for eight months of the year, we were below the income budget. Two months ago it looked improbable that we would meet the budget by the end of the year. Conditions improved; so a month ago there was a glimmer of hope that we might possibly meet it. December removed all doubt with an incredible 41.8 percent increase over December 1984. That ended the year with a 13.1 percent increase over last year.

There were several factors involved. We were comparing this December with a comparatively low December last year, which was only 1.4 percent more than the previous year. The major factor which gave such an excellent percentage increase this year was the response to Mr. Armstrong's recent co-worker and member letters. The members' and co-workers' response was the best we have seen in many years. There was an urgent need, Mr. Armstrong explained, and the response was incredible!

We here at Pasadena wish to thank all of you for your generosity and sacrifice in this time of need.

In spite of such a fine increase, the expenses outpaced the income. As mentioned in my previous reports, we exceeded the expense budget in order to take advantage of new and unexpected television station offerings. This cost a lot of extra money for station time and produced unprecedented requests for literature. This caused over-budget expenses in the Mail Processing Department. At the time of this writing, it appears that expenses will exceed the income by almost 1 percent for the year. We hope to recover that and add much more to needed reserves in 1986. This should be possible as a result of a very stringent no-increase budget for most departments.

When we have a very good increase in income, there often is a marked decrease over the next month or two. If this happens in January and

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February, we could be back to the same difficult condition we were in. Please pray with us that this will not happen, and that we will have an excellent year financially. If so, the pace of God's work will be increased.

--Leroy Neff, Treasurer

FROM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

FOURTH REFRESHER BEGINS; ON CORRECTION; INDEX;
PRAYER REQUEST; INTERNATIONAL NEWS--BRITISH REGION

Fourth Refresher Begins The first session of the fourth Ministerial Refreshing Program began this past Wednesday, January 8. The schedule this time is a little less rigorous than previous programs, with a half hour mid-morning break, one and one-half hours for lunch and classes concluding at 4:00 p.m. daily. I think you'll again find the classes very interesting and helpful. Instruction on visiting new contacts, getting the balance between work and family responsibilities, prophecy, the Bible, singles, the family, counselling, preaching, decorum, leadership, drug abuse, as well as several other timely and exciting presentations, will make this program of outstanding value to the ministry.

On Correction Perhaps one of the most important factors in our ability to grow spiritually is our attitude toward correction. As ministers, we must be able, with God's help, to take correction properly, as well as be able to give it properly.

It is a natural human proclivity to be unable to accept correction, often to even be resentful of it. Mr. Armstrong has often stated that the most difficult thing for a man to do is to admit he is wrong. We must ask, why? The answer is given by the apostle Peter.

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was guile found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (I Peter 2:18-23, RAV).

Christ's attitude was one of humility. Even though He was great, He was clothed in humility. That example of no guile, no threatening, not rendering reviling for reviling, is the example Peter is saying Christ set for us. He even says "to this you were called." Here Peter is speaking of the attitude we should have when confronted with unjust or wrongful treatment. But how much more should we be responsive to correction given in love for the right reasons? And God's correction is always given in love (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Most people have no problem understanding the need for correction of those under them. They realize that on occasion they need to step in and point out the flaws and weaknesses of those under them (although

they may often neglect or avoid doing it). But when it comes to receiving correction from those over them, their understanding of government and responsibility breaks down.

God has placed all of us under government. The local church, the deacons, elders, associates and assistants are under the spiritual care and responsibility of the pastor. In turn the pastors are under the care and responsibility of Church Administration. And it is under the authority of Mr. Armstrong. And Mr. Armstrong is under the authority of Jesus Christ, who is under the authority of God the Father.

When anyone along that line of authority needs correction, it must be given if growth is to occur. As any of us needs to be able to receive correction properly, we are also to give it properly.

Some former ministers seemed to think Mr. Armstrong never got corrected. Their spiritual understanding was so limited they could not see the ways God works with His leader. And they seemed to think that Mr. Armstrong never corrected their boss. I can tell you that is nonsense! Mr. Armstrong knows how to be corrected and how to give correction. And he does not neglect his responsibility.

Mr. Armstrong has often stated that the important factor in correction is the attitude. After all, the purpose of correction is to help, not to hinder! To encourage a person to change, to grow. If the attitude is godly and responsive, great compassion, patience and mercy can and should be displayed. But if, on the other hand, the attitude is one of self-justification, stubbornness or even belligerence and resentment, then action must be taken according to God's instruction in His Word.

We must exercise mercy and compassion even as God does. We should be praying for it and growing in it. But we must also be close enough to God to be able to exercise godly action in love when necessary.

Pray for wisdom, for discernment and for an understanding heart. And also pray for the mind of Jesus Christ, to be clothed in humility and to be able to take correction in a right attitude or appreciation for it, so that you will be able to give it prudently as well. The apostle Paul gave specific instruction on this subject in I Timothy 5:1-2 (RAV):

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

I pray daily for you ministers and your wives, as I know Mr. Armstrong does. I care about your success, your future, your growth and your value to God. I want to see you fully maximized in your ability to serve God's people and to fulfill your calling. And God cares far more than any of us, as mere human beings, are even able to.

I wrote some time ago about guarding against the potential of falling into the attitude of being willing to criticize or run down headquarters--whether about decisions, policies or personalities--in conversation with others. This subtle, satanic trap is a roadblock to being able to accept correction in a godly attitude and therefore to grow properly. When we become the judges of our superiors, we lose the

needed humility to respect their office enough to listen to them. Instead, we can't see beyond our criticisms of the supposed weaknesses and shortcomings we think we know all about.

We must remember that we are a family. Not just a team. But a family--the brethren of Jesus Christ and children of God. That fact gives a much broader meaning to the word unity. I appreciate the many statements from ministers about how free they feel to call in to Church Administration to counsel about anything and everything--whether church matters or personal problems. That's the way it should be. Mr. Armstrong set that example and all of us ought to be following it. This is one of the many ways that we follow him as he follows Christ.

I also want to convey to you Mr. Armstrong's deep appreciation for the cooperation and teamwork so evident today among the ministry as we grow more and more toward that total family oneness and unity of the Family of God. I want to encourage each of you to feel free as always to call in any time day or night. Never worry that maybe I'll be too busy or that it's too late at night. My policy has always been to return every call as I'm sure you all realize.

Finally, we all need to take to heart Mr. Armstrong's admonitions to draw closer to God as this age begins to close. Now is the time to strengthen and enhance your relationship with God through prayer, Bible study and fasting, that you will be able to always stand faithfully as a part of God's ministry.

Let's all ask God for His spirit of power, love and a sound mind, that we might keep in full focus His government and our part in it, so we may grow into even more effective tools in God's service.

Index To assist you in locating necessary information in the "Pastor General's Report," we are adding an annual index to the PGR. The index is divided into two sections. The first covers policy, administrative and general guideline topics. The second is devoted entirely to topics covered in Mr. Hogberg's "On the World Scene." Topics in both sections are listed in alphabetical order by subject. We feel the index should fulfill close to 99 percent of the typical minister's PGR reference needs.

You will find the index stapled to the back of this issue. Being on the back, it is easy to remove for those who wish to file it in a separate location. Otherwise, it is convenient to leave it attached to this issue. That way you can always remember that the first issue of each year contains the index for the previous year.

Prayer Request Mr. Filidor Illesca, local elder in Temuco, Chile, died this past Monday, January 7, of kidney failure after a long illness. Mr. and Mrs. Illesca had no children.

Mr. Illesca was serving God's Church in Santiago when he was ordained a deacon in 1974 and an elder in 1976. He was employed by the Church in 1976 and continued serving in Santiago until 1980, when he was moved to Temuco. Mr. Illesca was 74.

Please pray for his widow, Edith, that God will grant her peace and strength in this critical time. Mr. Mario Seiglie, pastor of the Santiago, Chile church, will conduct Mr. Illesca's funeral.

Please also note Mr. Frank Brown's comments about Mr. Elijah Chukwudi's worsening condition.

International News

From Frank Brown It was a pleasure to welcome Mr. Leroy Neff, Treasurer of the Church, and two of his staff--Mr. Fred Stevens, Accounting Manager, and Mr. Ritchie Gaston, General Ledger Supervisor--who visited Elstree House recently. They took the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the financial reporting systems we are using here in the U.K.

Our new computer accounting system is now almost "de-bugged." This is a highly sophisticated system which enables us to produce a report of either an individual country or region, or a consolidated report, and also a report detailing either indigenous or subsidy expenditure. These reports, which will be right up to date, will provide a valuable managerial tool for improved budget control.

The January 1986 issue of "The Plain Truth" had a circulation of 157,271 in the United Kingdom and Eire, an increase of 6.4 percent over January 1985. In line with these increases, the mail count for the month of November was up 32.1 percent, bringing the year-to-date total to 259,723 pieces of mail, an increase of 15.9 percent. There is good news about mail income as well--the month of November saw a month-to-date increase of 7.2 percent, bringing the year-to-date increase to 13.4 percent. "The Good News" increased by 144.9 percent since last year, from just over 8,000 to almost 20,000.

The autumn series of advertisements in Scandinavian newspapers have not only brought us excellent response rates, but have also stimulated comment from readers. Several readers of BERGENS TIDENDE wrote to the editor asking about the organization behind these inserts. These questions prompted some free (if not altogether accurate) publicity. BERGENS TIDENDE carried a picture of the insert under the heading "An unfortunate mixture of religion and politics." The article, although sneering in tone, did give some food for thought, explaining our belief that the British people descended from some of the 10 lost tribes of Israel, and that the English throne will become the governing seat of the coming Christ. With a response rate of almost 1.9 percent, higher than any we have ever had before in Scandinavia, it would seem that the article made some people look again at the insert!

The combined Norwegian- and English-language "Plain Truth" circulation in Scandinavia for the January 1986 issue was 44,619--up 39.6 percent over last year. The "Good News" list has increased from 679 to 1,689--a 149.9 percent increase since the December 1984 issue.

With the "World Tomorrow" program now appearing regularly in Norway, we are beginning to receive responses from viewers requesting literature. We now have an inventory of 23 titles in the Norwegian language, including both booklets and reprint articles.

English "Plain Truth" circulation on the continent of Europe is now 35,800 copies, slightly down from last year due to measures taken to curb growth in the file. The "Good News" file is up 148.5 percent to 5,126 copies, and "Youth 85" is up by 72.5 percent to 552 copies.

In the Middle East, following unprecedented growth in the "Plain Truth" file, new subscribers are being held and not added immediately to the file, since budgetary limitations do not permit us to fulfill all these requests. Even with these measures, the January 1986 circulation is up 21.4 percent over the January 1985 issue. The "Good News" list has increased by 171.5 percent in the last year, and "Youth 85" by 468 percent!

Mr. Chukwudi, a full-time minister in Nigeria, appears to be getting weaker and suffers from swelling in both legs and feet, headaches and a persistent cough. Speaking has also become a problem for him. He very much needs the prayers of the Church.

At the end of December Mr. Steve LeBlanc will be leaving Kenya to return to serve in the United States and will be working in Pasadena. Mr. John Andrews, a 1983 graduate of Ambassador College, has now begun to assist Mr. Willis in Kenya with a view to taking a fuller role when Mr. LeBlanc leaves. He has gone to Kenya on an initial trial basis to enable him to acclimatize himself with that part of the world, and to see if he will be able to fit into the very different life-style he will find in East Africa.

--Joseph Tkach, Church Administration

FROM EDITORIAL SERVICES

"PLAIN TRUTH" MEETING; SAARC CONFERENCE; "GOOD NEWS" UPDATE;

"Plain Truth" Meeting As usual in Pasadena, the influx of a million people here for the Rose Bowl game and Rose Parade signals the beginning of 1986. In Editorial, we have just had our May "Plain Truth" planning session and are finishing up the April magazine. We are already well into another productive new year.

Our April cover will illustrate Jeff Zhorne's article on racial prejudice, a significant and sensitive issue around the world. In May we will continue with chapter 6 of Mr. Armstrong's book "Mystery of the Ages." We also have Mr. Armstrong's approval to run an article he wrote years ago, but which is still right up to date, "Why Russia Will Not Invade America!"

SAARC Conference Keith Stump has returned from his two-week trip to Bangladesh for the SAARC Conference, where he helped represent Mr. Armstrong at the first-ever meeting of South Asian heads of government. He reported that he was constantly amazed and inspired by how many government officials recognized Mr. Armstrong's name and knew of his message and the Church.

In the summit, Mr. Stump said, the seven leaders displayed a genuine spirit of friendship and understanding, and a deep conviction to uplift the lives of the people of their troubled and violence-prone region. Mr. Stump said the goals and aspirations set forth by the leaders were admirable. How to put words into deeds, however, will be a major challenge, he said. A full report of Mr. Stump's trip will appear in the January 13 edition of "The Worldwide News."

"Good News" Update Mail, mostly from newer readers, continues to be overwhelmingly positive. New readers are surprised and inspired by the powerful articles they read in "The Good News." As of this month, "Good News" circulation is 786,000, with fully 90 percent of the readership non-Church members.

With the March "Good News," we began to insert our own galley corrections and reformat articles to fit layouts on the Bedford typesetting terminals here in Editorial. Doing the work on our own terminals should streamline the back-and-forth process between Editorial and Publishing.

In the January issue of "The Good News," the article "What Is God's Name?" by Keith Stump has already generated quite a few letters from readers, many from the "sacred names" camp.

--Dexter Faulkner, Editorial Services

MAIL PROCESSING UPDATE

GREATEST HARVEST YET!; NEW LITERATURE; WATS VOLUNTEERS

Greatest Harvest Yet! The year of 1985 was the greatest year of "harvest" that we in Mail Processing have seen! All-time records were established by very wide margins in nearly every category of mail and phone calls. Here are some of the highlights of the past year:

- 6.7 million pieces of mail were received. This was 37 percent more than last year! Other mail-receiving records included most mail received in one month--1.1 million pieces (December)--and highest weekend count--173,000 letters.
- 1.1 million phone calls were answered on our WATS lines, 42 percent over last year's total. Seventy-eight percent of the calls received in 1985 (855,000) were in response to the telecast. Records were also set for highest monthly call total--139,000 (December)--and highest weekend--26,020.
- 2.1 million new names were added to the Work's address files. This was 24.8 percent more than the previous year's count of 1.7 million.
- Our Terminals Section processed a record 1.2 million pieces of mail in the month of December. This included a one-day record of 300,000 pieces on December 17.
- Circulation counts for the Work's three magazines all reached record levels. They were as follows: "Plain Truth"--8.4 million copies, "Good News"--828,000 copies, "Youth" magazine--224,000 copies.
- More than 28,000 new co-workers were added in 1985. This was 13 percent over last year.

- 85.7 million publications (magazines, booklets, letters, lessons, etc.) were sent, 15.6 percent more than last year.
- 31.2 million publications were sent out by our Postal Center. This was a 19 percent increase over the previous year.
- More than 750,000 copies of "Mystery of the Ages" were requested or distributed, as well as 640,000 copies of "The U.S. and Britain in Prophecy." These are the two highest counts for distribution of any book or booklet within a year's time.
- 8.4 million of Mr. Armstrong's letters were mailed this year, which was 1.1 million more than in 1984.
- 2.9 million semiannual letters were mailed this fall, which was the largest single letter mailing in the history of the Work.
- Mr. Armstrong's letter offering "Mystery of the Ages" to "Good News" readers brought in a 46 percent response, an all-time record for mailings to regular subscribers.

New Literature Because of a recent policy change by Mr. Armstrong, all new books and booklets, or those that have been revised, will be sent automatically to member heads-of-household worldwide. For example, the three booklets "Are We in the Last Days?", "Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?" and "The Bible--Superstition or Authority?" were recently mailed.

Thus, it is no longer necessary for members to request such literature. However, those who are baptized after a booklet is mailed will still need to request it. As always, you may want to encourage the brethren to read and study this new material as soon as they receive it.

WATS Volunteers Volunteers, who serve on the Sabbath crew and as in-home operators, now answer about 25 percent of the total calls that come in each weekend. More than 3,000 members collectively participate in these programs. We estimate that their efforts save God's Work nearly \$200,000 annually. They have expressed their deep appreciation many times for the opportunity to serve in this special way. We also wish to convey our sincere thanks to them for their many hours of dedication and sacrifice. These volunteers are becoming more and more a vital factor in fulfilling this phase of God's Work.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center