

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



VOL. 8, NO. 25

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 2, 1986

Dear Ministers,

Classes are under way for the new college year! I was able to meet each of the freshmen and deliver the orientation address at both Ambassador campuses the week of August 18. I encouraged the students to make the most of the opportunities they will have at AC by being participants rather than bystanders. I was impressed by the young men and women I met. They appear to be a fine, enthusiastic group of young people. As I wrote in "The Worldwide News," I look forward to learning great things about them in the future.

I went over to the television studio with members of my staff last Friday, August 22, to view the first completed telecast taped on the new set, due to air September 6-7. The program, hosted by David Hulme, is titled "The State of the World." I must say I am sure you are going to be impressed! The powerful message, enhanced dramatically by moving graphics, an all-new opening logo and closing sequence with new music and the visual effect of the new set is sure to "knock the socks off" our viewers! The impact of this opening program will be great. And, of course, it is only the first. Encourage the brethren who can receive the program to be sure to tune in. They won't want to miss it.

The strong summer response we've had indicates that the viewership is growing. Thank you for continuing to pray for the success of the program. God has clearly answered our prayers and has blessed our efforts. Let's not let down now.

The Feast of Tabernacles is now only six weeks away. Most of you full-time ministers will be speaking during the Feast. Let's pray for one another's messages as well as for our own as we begin finalizing our preparations. The messages at the Feast should be the highlight sermons and sermonettes of the year. They should be the most inspiring, encourag-

ing and interesting messages of the year. Ask God for His special inspiration both in preparation and delivery to really help His people by giving them the "meat in due season" they really need. We are God's human instruments. He will use us effectively if we humble ourselves under His mighty hand.

We have just received the final copies of the new, expanded "Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume I." Most of our brethren will receive their copies

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has given His people. I have heard parents refer to their childrens' anticipation and keeping of the Feast as purely physical, as a child in the world might approach Christmas. How sad!

Our loving and generous God has specifically set apart our children as "holy," from birth in many cases, and yet we parents sometimes go blindly along, unaware of the fertile minds of these "little ones."

Fellow ministers, please find time before the Feast of Tabernacles to exhort and encourage parents to teach their children the meaning of "rejoicing" and learning to fear the Eternal always.

Children also need to be taught the importance of their example at the Feast. Being different should be seen in the light of the blessings mentioned above. Parents must show their children how their part in the family example pleases God and helps to teach outsiders why God's way is best. Children can understand this principle!

Children should be given specific instruction about their behavior at the Feast, such as not running in buildings, not being overly noisy, etc.

Parents, especially new members attending the Feast, need to be reminded of the biblical and church teaching against improperly disciplining their children. It must be remembered that we are to be a light to the world, and the Feast is being conducted in publicly owned facilities. We do not want to have our people give the public a wrong impression of the biblical view of child correction.

Very young children with short attention spans may get "bored" with daily services. Parents should plan ahead to have on hand quiet toys, books, etc. for holding the interest of younger children during services.

Teenagers should not be attending the Feast alone. Rare exceptions to this rule have to be made in extenuating circumstances, but pastors should use caution in permitting this. Teenagers attending without their parents should be treated as adult prospective members and should live up to that standard.

If, as pastors, we do our part well before the Feast to instruct and motivate God's people we can help ensure that they have a wonderful Feast and learn the profound spiritual lessons God intends. Thanks for continuing to feed the flock!

Transfers God's Work is dynamic and change is something we have learned to expect. Let me bring you up to date.

Mr. Jim Reyer is being transferred to Pasadena to pastor the Imperial AM congregation. Mr. Selmer Hegvold will remain as an associate pastor and supervisor of the deaf program. This change provides Mr. and Mrs. Reyer the support of their children during Alice's illness and a more flexible work schedule for Jim. It also gives Mr. Hegvold a lighter load.

Replacing Mr. Reyer in Denver will be Mr. Doug Horchak. Doug felt he could be more effective in the field than in an office setting and this opening demanded someone of his rank and talents. We will miss him in

Church Administration. Coming in to assist me in the office will be Mr. Joe Tkach, Jr., currently serving as an elder in Phoenix, Arizona. Joe is a 1973 graduate of Ambassador College, Pasadena, with several years of experience in the field as well as at Headquarters. He and his wife Tammy and 7 month old Joe Tkach III should be arriving in Pasadena in early September. I know Mr. Tkach will appreciate having them here and those of us in Church Administration are looking forward to working with Mr. Tkach Jr.

TO BE ANNOUNCED BY ALL CHURCH PASTORS

Members should not go to the Feast without sufficient funds, expecting assistance at the Festival site. Only limited funds for genuine emergencies will be available at the Festival locations, and then only with the local pastor's recommendation.

TO BE READ IN ALL CHURCHES

Clipping Articles for the News Bureau

Once again the News Bureau wants to thank all members who have mailed in articles from your local newspapers that deal with the Worldwide Church of God, its ministers, members and affiliated organizations of the Church, and statements and articles of dissidents and their various affiliations. We would like to encourage you to please continue sending us all such articles in the future. The exact address to mail the articles to is

Attn.: W.O.J. Ambassador College News Bureau
300 West Green Street
Pasadena, CA 91129

The News Bureau will make certain that all who need to be advised of information contained in specific articles will be supplied with copies.

Please do not forget to include the name of the publication and the date when it was published. That is very important if we should ever need to quote from the article or make use of it in any way.

Note: The above does not apply to those individuals who are already clipping various news articles for the Legal Office.

Gene Hogberg

PLEASE ANNOUNCE IN ALL U.S. CHURCHES

The Festival Office has reached an agreement with Hertz Rent-a-Car to provide discounted car rentals at U.S. sites including Niagara Falls. Details will be given in printed form in about two weeks. Please do not call Hertz for information or reservations before receiving further details.

1985 "Diplomat" Many have phoned or called into Pasadena concerning the 1985 "Diplomat." Having purchased an issue at the 1985 Feast of Tabernacles or at one of the summer camps, they are wondering why they have not received their copy yet. However, we have only recently completed production of the book and sent all material to the publisher. Taking into account prepress, press and mailing time, the books should arrive in the mail during the first week in December. Thank you for your patience.

TO ALL U.S. AND CANADIAN MINISTERS

(Not to be announced)

Do you know of any member(s) in your area who as been contacted by Eugene Walter of Van Guard Investment Services within the last 2 months during which he sought funds for purposes of investing or as a loan?

If you know of any member(s) who previously invested with or advanced money to Mr. Walter for the purpose of investment in, please feel free to ask them about any recent contact.

If you have or obtain any information regarding the above, please call Andre Zick at (818) 304-6140.

International News

From Australia We were most encouraged this month by the increase in the number of new people requesting personal counsel with the ministry of God's Church. Visit requests for July increased by 86.8 percent over the same period last year. Total visit requests for the year so far are now 451--up 49.8 percent over the same period in 1985.

In analyzing the sources of our visit requests, we find the "World Tomorrow" telecast is playing a greater role in motivating people to begin making changes in their lives. In 1985 30 percent of our visit requests came in as a direct result of the telecast. In 1986 the percentage of visit requests attributable to the "World Tomorrow" programs has climbed to 41 percent.

In recent months there has been a serious downturn in the Australian economy which has begun to affect the income for God's Work in this area of the world. A recent survey by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and the National Australia Bank on the Australian economy found that the tertiary business sector, already experiencing its slowest growth in years, is facing the prospect of continued decline. The tertiary business sector covers retailing, wholesaling, transport and storage, finance, property and business services, the construction industry, recreation and personal services.

The survey also said that Australia can expect higher costs resulting from the introduction by the government of the controversial fringe benefits tax, and increased inflation. In addition, the latest employment figures revealed a sharp rise in the number of jobless.

Our members and co-workers are being affected by these rising costs of living, the slowdown in the Australian economy and the weakening of the Australian dollar on the world market. These factors are of concern as they will affect the ability of our members and co-workers to support God's Work, and themselves, financially.

So far 13,751 "Plain Truth" subscribers in Australia have responded to Mr. Tkach's May 5 semiannual letter. This represents 15.9 percent of the mailing list. The majority requested both booklets offered by Mr. Tkach -- "The Bible -- Superstition or Authority?" and "What is Faith?"

(Submitted by Robert Morton, Regional Director)

From New Zealand The Eternal is continuing to bless His Work in this part of the world with tremendous increases in almost every area of activity.

Income was up by a fine 27.3 percent for July, bringing the year-to-date increase to 19.5 percent; mail for the month was up 48.2 percent, and the year-to-date figure for mail received now stands at a plus 21.9 percent.

The "Plain Truth" mailing list is right on the target level we projected for it at the beginning of the year. However, between now and the end of the year an estimated 4,400 subscribers will be dropped off because of failure to renew, so we plan to replace these by running more newspaper inserts in September.

Our April series of 300,000 newspaper inserts brought in 3,600 new subscribers at a cost per response of \$7.61.

We're finding that the brochure holder program is working very well in New Zealand, bringing in a return of about 6 percent, as opposed to a 1 percent return from the newsstand magazine program.

The church in Wellington is now maintaining 140 brochure outlets, a rate of one for every man, woman and child in the congregation!

Because of the burgeoning response to the recent "World Tomorrow" radio programs, we've found it necessary to add extra phone lines, and our office phone number has changed as a result. The new number is Auckland 608-100.

There is much excitement in Fiji as the brethren there have the opportunity to be served for the first time by a full-time minister of God. Mr. Neville Fraser and family arrived in Fiji during July, after completing a year's study at Ambassador College, Pasadena. The Frasers will look after the Fijian brethren while their local minister, Ratu Epeli Kanaimawi, has the opportunity to go through a year's training at Ambassador. Mr. and Mrs. Kanaimawi departed Fiji in August, along with their daughter Alisi, who has been accepted as an AC freshman.

As well as taking care of our two church congregations in Fiji and the other members and prospectives scattered throughout the island group, Mr. and Mrs. Fraser will look after mail reading and other office functions in Suva. To help familiarize them with these aspects, Mr. Peter Nathan and Mr. Rex Morgan traveled to Fiji during the month. Mr. Nathan also visited the brethren in Tonga, and Mr. Morgan visited Niue and Western Samoa.

(Submitted by Peter Nathan, Regional Director)

From South Africa Recent large donations to God's Church in South Africa have increased our year-to-date income tremendously. At the end of July, without the two large contributions, our year-to-date increase in all accounts was 4.075 percent. With them added, the year-to-date increase is 23.2 percent. We are thankful to God for these added blessings.

Our "Plain Truth" magazine circulation in southern Africa is 226,116, of which 85,000 are distributed on newsstands. Year to date we have added 24,154 new subscribers and have dropped 125,456 through our ongoing renewal system.

The "Good News" circulation is 27,433, which is 95.9 percent up over this time last year.

The "Youth 86" magazine has a circulation of 10,342 and this is 89 percent more than last year.

Our Correspondence Course students total 8,724. The donors total 2,052, which is 5 percent up on 1985. Our co-workers total 1,537, higher by 2.5 percent. Encouraging is the fact that in spite of the economic conditions our new donors and co-workers added this year show increases of 11.7 percent and 13.9 percent respectively.

Our churches now total 17 and are served by 12 full-time ministers in the field assisted by seven local church elders. The membership total is 1,672 and this is 6 percent more than at the same time last year. The baptisms this year show an increase of 40.7 percent and the disfellowshipments are down by 66.7 percent.

We have much to be thankful for. God has intervened for our brethren hit by unrest in various townships. The state of emergency still exists throughout the country. The unrest has quieted down. Our ministers can again visit the townships. Just before the state of national emergency was declared our ministers could not visit some of the members and prospective members in their homes. This was too dangerous.

Now we face sanctions and at this time do not know what economic hardships are ahead of us. Our prayer is that God will protect His Church and allow circumstances under which we can complete His Work.

(Submitted by Dr. Roy McCarthy, Regional Director)

NOTICE TO ALL MINISTERS
(Not to be announced)

By mutual consent the Church has granted Mr. Ellis La Ravia a leave of absence for family reasons. Mr. La Ravia, who has maintained a hectic pace at Headquarters for several years, will now be able to have a well-deserved rest and personal time with his family. We would appreciate your prayers on their behalf.

--Larry Salyer, Director of Church Administration

EDITORIAL SERVICES

"Plain Truth" Meeting "The Plain Truth" will begin the new year by taking a look at the old. In our planning session for the January issue, we discussed a special section of articles on 1986's hot spots in the world. Titled "Great Challenges Facing Mankind Today," these articles will support an overarching article by senior writer Ronald Kelly that lists seven critical problems facing the world today. Together, these articles will fill one signature (16 pages) of the magazine. These seven problem areas insolvable by man are: 1) Political and religious ideology, 2) The world debt crisis and the population explosion, 3) World health, 4) The curse of war, 5) Weather and environment, 6) Moral crisis and 7) Technology: curse or cure? Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach's "Personal," "Does Truth Make You Feel Threatened?", is a perfect lead-in to this thought-provoking January issue. We will follow up in the February issue with a look at what's to come in 1987.

We've received quite a response to the article on teen pregnancy in the September "Plain Truth." Some excerpts follow:

"I am a 12-year-old girl, and in fifth grade. I have been subscribing to "The Plain Truth" for almost three years now. And I find your article about teen pregnancy rather interesting. After I sat down and read it I realized it could happen to anyone even my best friends or even me."

"In reading the article...on teen pregnancy all that keeps running through my mind is where was it six years ago. I am a 21-year-old mother of three children. My husband and I got married five years ago at the age of 16, seven months later at the age of 17 we had our first child. We lost a lot of friends and most of our relatives deserted us. I was not taught as a teenager about sex...."

"For several years now I've been a subscriber. Nowhere have I seen the ever-growing crisis of teenage pregnancy, the rampant epidemics of sexually spread diseases presented in more rational, unbiased reporting. Keep up the exceptional work!"

If you think the model on the September "Plain Truth" cover was a little young to represent pregnant teens, read this letter sent in to "Youth 86."

"I am 14 years old and I have had sex twice. After reading the article 'Signed: "Learning From My Mistakes"' it made me realize how wrong I was. It even brought tears to my eyes. I thought or made myself think that it was all right to have sex as long as you like the boy you're with. But now I know how wrong I was.

"The guys I was with were very sweet to me only before we ever did anything. Now we don't even talk to each other. The day after it happened, they called me all the names in the book--at the time it really hurt.

"Now it haunts me day and night. I know there are a lot of teens out there that know what I'm talking about. I have never told my parents about this; for all they know I'm a sweet little innocent angel sitting on top of the world and it hurts to think that I let them down."

This sad little girl ended her letter with a request for the brochure "Sexually Transmissible Diseases" and the book "The Missing Dimension in Sex."

Booklet Update As we've mentioned before, when appropriate we are combining existing literature to give our readers more comprehensive information on given subjects. A forthcoming edition of "Pagan Holidays-- or God's Holy Days -- Which?" will also include "How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?" and "God's Holy Days in the New Testament" from the September, 1982, "Good News." Reprint No. 869, "Is Jesus God?", will be retitled "Millions Do Not Know What Christ Really Was." This reprint includes the articles "Is Jesus God?", "The Mystery of Melchizedek Solved at Last!", "What Was Jesus Like as a Human Being?" from the September, 1980, "Good News," and a box that answers the question as to whether Jesus had long hair.

"Worldwide News" Festival Issue We're wrapping up work on our annual pre-Feast issue of "The Worldwide News." Please encourage the brethren to make use of this issue. The articles on how to prepare for the Feast spiritually and physically should benefit members whether new in the Church or long-time veterans of many Festivals.

"Plain Truth" Writer Interviewed "Plain Truth" senior writer Keith Stump was called August 26 by Gregory McLaughlin of CNN News in New York City. Mr. McLaughlin had just read Mr. Stump's article "Communication with the Dead -- Is It Possible?" in the September "Plain Truth." Mr. McLaughlin explained that he was assigned to cover the story of the Smurl family and their "haunted house" in West Pittston, Pennsylvania. The story has received nationwide attention in recent weeks. He asked if Mr. Stump felt the Smurl's story was legitimate or a hoax and discussed with him some of the points in the "Plain Truth" article. Mr. McLaughlin is a subscriber to "The Plain Truth."

--Dexter Faulkner, Editorial Services

MEDIA SERVICES

Greetings again from the Television studios.

The response so far to the summer reruns of the "World Tomorrow" television program has been outstanding as Mr. Rice reported in the last "Pastor General's Report."

The responses now for the first three weeks of August continue to climb. "The Middle East in Prophecy" program drew 33,051 calls (45,290 originally); the "STD: Our Modern Plague" program drew 28,457 calls (32,055 originally); and the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" program drew 33,908 calls (37,748 originally).

The new fall programming is almost ready for dubbing and shipping out to the stations. Everyone in Television and others, including Mr. Tkach and his staff, who have seen the program are very excited about our new format which we feel will improve the effectiveness of the program.

Please continue to pray for God to bless the response to the new fall programming.

Here is the schedule of "The World Tomorrow" that will air in September 1986:

SEPT 6-7

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

Is there a way to understand the complex times in which we live? Why, in an age of advanced technology, are we still beset with ever-increasing poverty, famine, terrorism and war? David Hulme shows, from the Bible, how we can find practical answers to our worries and fears in this troubled world.

LIT OFFERED: The World Won't End This Way!, PT

SEPT 13-14

SUPERPOWER CONFRONTATION?

Will Russia attack America? Will America attack Russia? Will tensions between these two nations plunge the world into a nuclear war that could destroy all life on earth? David Hulme shows how Bible prophecy reveals that the emergence of a third superpower will drastically alter the course of world events.

LIT OFFERED: Why Russia Will Not Attack America, The United States and Britain in Prophecy, PT

SEPT 20-21

WHAT IS MAN?

Throughout the ages the world's great thinkers, philosophers and theologians have wrestled with the question -- "Why are we here on this earth?" Yet not one of them seems to know! David Albert shows how the Bible reveals the true meaning of our existence and what humanity's ultimate destiny will be.

LIT OFFERED: What Is Man?, What Do You Mean...Salvation?, PT

SEPT 27-28

BLUEPRINT FOR PARENTING

Children are one of the most important resources we have. Yet today, in the Western world, too many parents are unable to cope with child rearing, thus making children the victims of neglect and even abuse. David Albert shows how God's Word, the Bible, gives practical solutions for being successful parents.

LIT OFFERED: The Plain Truth About Child Rearing, PT

--Larry Omasta, Media Services

FROM FLEET ADMINISTRATION**REAR SHOULDER BELTS; BELTS**

Rear Shoulder Belts General Motors will make rear-seat lap/shoulder belts standard equipment in its passenger cars built in North America in certain 1987 models. The belts will be in all vehicles by the end of the 1989 model year. With this move, GM will become the first American automaker to standardize rear-seat belts; they have been available as dealer-installed options since 1980.

Belts The drive belts on your vehicle should be checked every 24-25,000 miles, or more often, to keep your vehicle in good operating condition. If you choose to check them yourself, examine the belts for cracking, fraying and a shiny or glazed surface where they contact the pulleys. Squealing or vibrating belts can be a good indication that adjustment or replacement is needed. There are three main belts on most cars, with an air conditioning belt on A/C-equipped vehicles. Some newer cars have only one drive belt that controls all the systems, called a "serpentine" belt. Loss of the water-pump belt can cause overheating and eventual engine seizure. A loose or damaged generator belt can prevent the generator from charging and run the battery down. A faulty power steering belt can lead to the failure of the power steering system. A/C belt problems can mean no A/C. Belt adjustment or replacement is a relatively low-cost maintenance item that can help prolong the life of your vehicle.

--Dean May, Fleet Administration

MAIL PROCESSING UPDATE

U.S. STATISTICS; ONE MILLION TV CALLS; IN-HOME PROGRAM INVALUABLE;
PC AND CW CALLBACKS; REMINDER ABOUT OFFERINGS;

U.S. Statistics Our cumulative year-to-date statistics for January through July have just been made available. Most areas are still experiencing growth over last year. Here are the figures:

| <u>Category</u> | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> | <u>Change</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Total Outgoing Mail | 52,718,168 | 60,901,664 | 15.5 percent |
| Total Mail Received* | 3,586,047 | 3,428,813 | -4.4 percent |
| Average Mail Received Per Working Day* | 23,681 | 22,643 | -4.4 percent |
| Books and Booklets Sent | 2,578,462 | 3,549,196 | 37.6 percent |
| New Names Added to File* | 1,258,065 | 1,026,867 | -18.4 percent |
| Total WATS Calls | 583,144 | 1,112,665 | 90.8 percent |
| Member Count | 57,864 | 60,408 | 4.4 percent |
| Co-Worker Count | 61,168 | 70,701 | 15.6 percent |
| Donor Count* | 105,122 | 103,195 | -1.8 percent |
| New CC Students (January-June only) | 79,293 | 83,743 | 5.6 percent |

*The negative percentages in some areas result primarily from the budgetary cutbacks approved by Mr. Armstrong last year.

One Million TV Calls On Sunday, August 17, our WATS operations received the one-millionth telephone response to the telecast in 1986. This is the first time we have ever passed the one million mark in TV calls within one calendar year. (The total number of WATS calls would be much larger if we were to include all other miscellaneous sources, such as changes of address, minister visit requests, etc.) We reached this milestone because of the upsurge in WATS responses since the new telecasts began.

In-Home Program Invaluable The WATS In-Home Program has been a major factor in helping us keep pace with the large growth in TV calls since January. In-home operators have now answered 150,000 calls since the program began in July 1985.

On a normal weekend, these volunteers answer approximately 20 percent of all the WATS calls which come in. For example, on the weekend of August 16-17, in-home operators took 7,271 calls, representing 21 percent of the total calls received. The percentage of calls taken by in-home operators will increase as more lines are added to the SWIFT system. (SWIFT, which stands for Supervised WATS In-Home Forwarding Technology, is the name given to the equipment that our engineers designed to route and monitor in-home calls.)

PC and CW Callbacks The Personal Correspondence and Co-Worker Departments are able to save the Work hundreds of man-hours and thousands of dollars each year by using the WATS line to answer many basic questions from people who call us. This procedure, known as a "callback," takes much less time than writing and processing a letter. It also adds a warm and personal touch. Some of the needs and requests handled through callbacks are:

- Prayer requests: giving encouragement to those who are sick and letting them know we care.
- Counseling for financial and personal problems.
- Basic Bible questions dealing with the Sabbath, Holy Days, unclean meats, etc.

Any question needing a more detailed answer or dealing with a controversial issue is handled by letter or referred to the local minister.

Since this program was instituted, 7,000 callbacks have been made.

Reminder About Offerings With the Feast of Tabernacles coming up shortly, there is something that you as ministers can do to assist us in Mail Processing. In order to help us process Holy Day offerings quickly and accurately, would you please read the following to your congregation. Ask the members to:

1. Use the indexed offering envelopes provided from Headquarters whenever possible. Members can carry these envelopes in their briefcases or Bibles to make sure they are easily available and not forgotten.
2. Have the PT subscription number handy in case the indexed envelopes are lost and unlabeled envelopes provided at the site must be used. Members can always write their subscription numbers in their Bibles.
3. Be sure all checks and money orders are signed and/or countersigned, with money amounts properly filled out.
4. Smooth out currency before placing it in the envelopes. This saves many man-hours which would otherwise be spent straightening out crumpled bills.
5. Enclose only Holy Day offerings in the envelopes. Tithes or other funds should be sent separately or turned in at the Festival Business Office.

We would like to thank you and the brethren for your continued help and cooperation.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

CHERNOBYL IMPACT SPREADS; DIPLOMATIC FLURRIES IN SOVIET BLOC AND ASIA;
RELIGIOUS RESURGENCE IN EASTERN EUROPE

Chernobyl Aftermath Soviet authorities attending a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna have reported new details on the aftermath of the explosion of a nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl plant last April 26. Their report--remarkably forthright in the opinion of Western experts--attributed the accident primarily to a succession of six operator errors at the plant. Plant technicians, in conducting an experiment, had shut off emergency cooling systems on the Number 4 reactor for more than 12 hours. This enabled the unpredictable graphite-regulated reactor to suddenly surge in power, resulting in an explosion.

The Soviets say the death toll now stands at 31 and that 6,500 people may die prematurely. In addition, the 135,000 people evacuated in a 300-square-mile area around the contaminated plant may not be able to return for four years. Top soil is being scraped off in parts of a 1,000-square-mile area and hauled away for burial as nuclear waste.

The impact of the explosion is still being felt in parts of Europe where winds carried and deposited radiation from the initial explosion. Sheep farmers in Cumbria in northwest England, for example, have had no choice but to destroy their animals. But the effect of the disaster is especially pronounced in Scandinavia, according to this report, which moved over REUTERS news wire on August 21:

Latest measurements in Norway show increasing radiation levels in sheep, reindeer and fish, while in neighboring Sweden, berries popular all over Scandinavia have joined the list of foodstuffs declared unfit for human consumption, following the nuclear power plant accident in the Soviet Union. Tor Gunnerød, head of research at Norway's Directorate for Nature Management, told reporters that latest measurements indicate radioactivity in lichen--the main source of nutrition for reindeer--may increase by four to five times on current high levels. Gunnerød said the contamination meant that reindeer in Norway and Sweden would be slaughtered in the hundreds of thousands this autumn and their meat lost. Reindeer meat forms a regular part of the Nordic diet. Gunnerød said researchers now fear mass deaths of reindeer in two or three years from the accumulation of radiation.

The contamination of berries, meat and fresh water fish is likely to play havoc with the eating habits of Norwegians and Swedes. In both countries, berries grow wild in huge amounts and are a favorite dish. Lingonberry growers said West German importers have blacklisted Sweden and domestic wholesalers are reducing purchases of blueberries and arctic raspberries. Researchers say cattle have so far escaped large doses of contamination because they do not eat lichen or moss, which covers much of the Nordic countryside. Lichen, unlike root plants, take nourishment from the air and absorbed much of the extra radiation recorded in Scandinavia after the fire at the Soviet nuclear plant.

The political fallout between the Soviets and their East-bloc neighbors is difficult to calculate. The disaster certainly fed new stories into the anti-Soviet joke mill ("How do you measure Soviet-Polish friendship?" asks a Pole. "With a Geiger counter.") Still, Eastern Europeans are heavily dependent upon nuclear power generators for their electricity, with much of the technology Soviet-supplied (though no East-bloc states use graphite reactors). In Western Europe the Chernobyl blow-up fueled antinuclear power groups in Britain and West Germany, but in France there was hardly a ripple of official or public reaction, not even a government suggestion to review the nation's ambitious, world-leading nuclear energy program.

In light of the damage and health risks produced when just one of four reactors at one nuclear plant exploded, consider this fact: There are

approximately 150 nuclear power stations throughout Europe. It would not require a nuclear war in Europe to produce an unimaginable catastrophe--but rather an attack by conventional shells and bombs on the nuclear power stations!

Diplomatic Flurries The announcement on August 27 that Erich Honecker, the head of the Communist party in East Germany, will visit Beijing in October highlights a flurry of diplomatic activity involving three major sectors of the Communist world -- China, the Soviet Union and the East European bloc. Leaders in each region have their own agendas for encouraging the increased activity.

In perhaps the most dramatic development, the Chinese Communist Party is embarking on a program to re-establish party-to-party ties with virtually all the East European Communist parties, relations which were severed with the onset of the Sino-Soviet break a quarter century ago. "The renewed links will mark a dramatic change in the Communist world," reported the August 23 LOS ANGELES TIMES.

The trek to Beijing by Herr Honecker is expected to be followed in short order by visits by party chiefs from Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. It is certain that these ties could not have been resumed without the approval of Soviet party chief Mikhail Gorbachev. As stated, leaders in all three regions have their own reasons for the chumminess. Soviet leaders apparently hope that party-to-party ties (as distinct from government-to-government diplomatic relations, which do exist) between Eastern Europe and China will be the first step in a process leading to links between the Soviet and Chinese parties. The Chinese leaders, however, have their own reasons. The uppermost may be their desire to encourage greater political independence on the part of the Eastern Europeans. Beijing still routinely denounces Soviet "hegemonism" or dominance of the communist world. For the East Europeans, they certainly see the Chinese initiative as a chance to put a little distance between them and Moscow. In sum, there is much activity across the broad expanse of Eurasia, and there is little doubt that Mr. Gorbachev is attempting to reverse the history of the past quarter century, as reported in the August 3 TIMES of London:

The Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, has begun the first stage of a diplomatic offensive aimed at realigning Russia and China in a powerful communist partnership. Gorbachev last week launched his attempt to mend the fences, in disrepair for the past 25 years, in a speech at Vladivostok, 40 miles from the Chinese border. He announced that he was withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, and possibly some from Mongolia.

This is seen in Moscow diplomatic circles as an opening effort to satisfy Chinese demands that before there can be an rapprochement, Russia must remove "obstacles" that lie across the path to better relations. The obstacles are: Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, Russian troop concentrations along the Chinese border (including a large presence in Mongolia) and Soviet support for Vietnam's military activities in Kampuchea. Gorbachev promised to withdraw 7,000 of the 120,000 Soviet troops from Afghanistan. He also said talks were under way

with Mongolia to withdraw Soviet troops from Mongolia's border with China.

"History entrusted the Soviet and the Chinese peoples with an extremely responsible mission," Gorbachev said. "Why not support each other? Why not cooperate in implementing our plans?" China quickly dismissed the troop withdrawals as "insignificant," but Gorbachev probably did not expect immediate Chinese approval.

If the Soviet Union succeeded in restoring the strong party-to-party ties that were broken off during bitter ideological quarrels, it would have powerful implications for the United States and the rest of Asia. Gorbachev knows that China is hardly likely to relinquish the privileged position in which it is wooed by both superpowers. But he knows also that any rapprochement would undermine the American position in Asia.

As part of his diplomatic offensive Gorbachev is reported to have agreed to resolve border demarcation disputes in China's favor and to have offered to train the first Chinese astronaut. However much China may wish to play them down, the two powers already have cooperative projects. Last month a big Chinese trade exhibition opened in Moscow, the first in 33 years. It will be matched by a Soviet exhibition in Peking next year.

Also commenting on Moscow's China move was Jerry F. Hough, staff member of the Brookings Institute in Washington, writing in the August 27 LOS ANGELES TIMES. The consequences of the Kremlin's "bold sweep" could seriously impact the United States, he reported.

In the decade since the death of Mao Tse-tung, Soviet-Chinese relations have gradually improved, but the process has been excruciatingly slow. Now a major breakthrough may be at hand.... According to conventional wisdom, the current difficulties can be traced to three actions by the Soviet Union: its invasion of Afghanistan, its support for the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, and its large military presence on its eastern border. In addition, the border line itself has been in dispute, with the Chinese claiming that it runs down the main channel of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, and the Soviets saying that it runs along the river banks on the Chinese side....

The real concessions have been made on the border question. First, Moscow has publicly agreed to the Chinese definition of the river boundary. If there are no catches, this would give China a number of islands that were the scenes of bloody battles in the past. The Amur has already been reopened to commercial traffic. The Soviets also have...agreed to resume the construction of a railroad from Soviet Central Asia to the Chinese province of Sinkiang that had been stopped in the early 1960s.

The Chinese are reacting coolly in public to these proposals, emphasizing the necessity for progress on the Cambodian issue.

However, they are accepting the economic openings, and the border concession is a powerful incentive to reach an agreement on the troop issue.

The significance of these moves is not limited to Soviet-Chinese relations. First, Soviet concessions on the river boundary removed the major obstacle to giving several disputed offshore islands to Japan. The Soviets had feared that such a gift would cause China to harden its demands for disputed river territory. Now Soviet diplomacy with Japan is becoming extremely active.

And the timing of the Soviets' moves reaffirms the seriousness of their courtship of Europe. The Chinese had announced a reduction of 1 million troops some time ago. The Soviets were remarkably slow in responding, probably because they were uncertain about where to relocate troops involved in a border pull-back. A shift of large numbers to the West would frighten Europe; if they were demobilized before negotiations with Europe, the Soviet Union would seem weak. The Soviets' proposal in June for a mutual reduction of 100,000 to 200,000 troops in Europe in the next year or so, and a total of 500,000 by the early 1990s, enabled Moscow to make the subsequent troop-reduction offer to Peking....

The Soviet Union and China still have many conflicting interests and views, and they are unlikely ever to become close allies again. But only a person guided by hopes rather than by the evidence would believe that nothing is changing in Soviet policy.... In any case we should not kid ourselves. If the Soviet Union is making serious offers to Europe, Japan and China, we face a real challenge.

As further evidence of the geopolitical activity generated under the dynamic leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet officials recently said they are considering entering joint business ventures with Western nations. The U.S.S.R., they added, would even like to become a "full-fledged member" of the Western-world General Agreements in Trade and Tariffs (GATT), an organization devoted to reducing trade barriers between nations. Moscow has asked to participate as an observer at an upcoming GATT conference. (How the state-run Soviet economy would mesh with those of the capitalist world nobody knows.)

And in perhaps the most remarkable evidence of Soviet openness under Mr. Gorbachev, there are reports that the Soviet Union would like to join Interpol, the international police network, in an effort to combat growing levels of crime, especially drug trafficking. The Soviets have previously been loathe to admit the existence of such social ills.

Religious Resurgence Enlivens Eastern Europe Meanwhile yet another phenomenon, highly disturbing to communist authorities, is taking place in Eastern Europe -- a "flowering of faith," according to the August 25 U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT:

Communist leaders for 40 years have encouraged, with varying degrees of intensity, the creation of Lenin's religion-free

society. Yet their failure among peoples whose past is deeply rooted in the church has never been so strikingly evident as it is today.... The most disturbing development for East-bloc regimes is the attraction of religion for young people, whom governments depend upon as future key supporters. Exhorted by church leaders to follow religious belief rather than official dogma, many young people see Communism as an uninspiring vehicle for cynical opportunists. In his May encyclical, Pope John Paul II defined the problem facing Communist authorities when he described the ideology of Marxism and the atheism supposed to flow from it as "spiritual ruin."

The Polish Pope, whose selection in 1978 buoyed Catholics throughout the Eastern bloc, remains critical to the reawakening.... Czech authorities have vetoed a visit by John Paul. Ordinary Czechs still secretly circulate among themselves the soul-stirring comments he made during his 1983 trip to Poland....

Indeed, the one constant of Eastern European religious life is the ability to flourish in defiance of repression. Nowhere is this clearer than in Romania, which has seen a spectacular growth among Protestant denominations despite years of hostile policies. More than 200,000 Baptists are now active in pressing for church space and in smuggling Bibles from abroad....

In Yugoslavia, which is not a member of the Eastern bloc, authorities tolerate religion but are openly concerned about its impact on the young. In one recent poll, 52 percent of young Yugoslavs -- up from 33 percent in 1965 -- described themselves as religious. The most dramatic public evidence of the spiritual revival in Yugoslavia is the pilgrimages by as many as 100,000 believers to the village of Medjugorje. The faithful believe the Virgin Mary's image has appeared there to young people every evening since June, 1981.

The true bulwark of religion in Eastern Europe, however, remains the Polish Catholic Church. Over centuries, it has embodied the Polish national consciousness and has become, since the containment of Solidarity, a rallying point for opponents to the regime.... In a letter smuggled out of prison, Adam Michnik, one of Poland's best-known political prisoners until his recent release, wrote that "being religious is becoming a synonym for being in opposition."

Today, worship by Polish youth is at unprecedented levels. In one recent poll, 75 percent said they participate in religious events and more than half said they believe in miracles.... Pope John Paul's next trip to his homeland, expected in June, 1987, seems likely to serve again as a national catharsis.

It's safe to say we will be looking at considerable political and religious activity across the dividing line in Europe in 1987 and beyond.

--Gene Hogberg, News Bureau