

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 27, 1979

THE YEAR THAT WAS

AND

THE YEAR NOW BEGINNING

by Herbert W. Armstrong

We are ending one of the most significant, evil, and hapless years in the world, and one of paradoxical persecution and at the same time successful and productive years in God's Work.

In the world there were wars here and there amid efforts for peace in the Middle East between Israel and Egypt. There was one of the greatest epidemics of starvation of men, women and babies in history. And the year ended with the American GIANT being held hostage by the comparatively small nation Iran.

A mob of angry Iranian militants has been able to put the most powerful nation on earth behind the eight ball, leaving the United States helpless! The principal U.S. objective is to free the 50 hostages of the U.S. Embassy alive. President Carter has said he has several options. But not one of them will work.

If the U.S. uses military invasion, that will defeat the whole American purpose, for the terrorists would kill all hostages before the invasion would reach the outskirts of Tehran. If the U.S. uses a naval blockade, Mr. Carter would have to allow oil shipments to go out to countries in the Russian orbit and Japan, which would keep Iran prosperous, and also allow medicines and certain foodstuffs to go in. Such a blockade would not hurt Iran for a long time.

Mr. Carter has planned to ask the UN for economic sanctions. The indication has been that the Kremlin and China would abstain from voting and America would have to get three or four third world nations to join in --meaning Arabs, and it appeared up to Christmas day to be impossible to get them. Besides, all these options endanger the U.S. peace with the Soviets. The U.S. cannot risk a nuclear World War III with Russia!

Already the International Court of Justice at The Hague has rendered the unanimous verdict in U.S. favor, but Khomeini ignores that, and it has no means of enforcing its verdict--so it was useless.

The Iranians are "sitting pretty," and the U.S. is "a sitting duck,"--helpless to do anything. All this, so far, has skyrocketed Mr. Carter's popularity with the voters--but the Ayatollah sneers that he is doing it for personal political reasons. Chances are, before election time the Carter popularity will skid down again when American voters wake up to the fact he has succeeded at NOTHING.

How is all this Iranian situation going to end? Nobody knows. It is at a stalemate.

A logical guess would be that the Iranians will try the hostages and, of course, convict them as "spies." Then they will claim to show the "mercy" of their Shiite sect of the Islamic religion, by "mercifully" pardoning them and releasing them. This, they will feel, will give them a tremendous moral victory over poor, helpless America.

But what of the year 1980? We are starting not only a new year but a new decade. If the commonly accepted chronology from creation of Adam and Eve is correct (which I think it ISN'T), the 6,000-year period of mankind on earth would end about 1996--only sixteen years after the decade we are about to enter. And surely we might well expect the second coming of Christ to occur no later than that. There apparently will be a 3½-year period for the Great Tribulation--and the "Day of the Lord" may come during the final year of that 3½ years.

Expect Pope John Paul II, with the Roman Curia, to start making great progress toward offering "their good offices" to help the nations of Europe unite again. Undoubtedly it is already working by secret negotiations.

Also expect world evils to worsen.

But there is another most significant and foreboding fact about all this: It has proved that the U.S. Embassy in one foreign nation has not been secure, and thereby proves that NO NATION'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN ANY OTHER NATION ARE SECURE--and THIS SMACKS OF WORLD CHAOS! It signals that the END OF THIS WORLD AS WE KNOW IT IS HERE!

But that, after all, is GOOD NEWS--for it also signals that the KINGDOM OF GOD IS VERY NEAR AT HAND!

Yes, this has been a year of proving that the governments of nations are unstable, being toppled at the rate of about one a month. It has proved that no Church or Work of God in California is safe. And if not in California, not in America. And if not in America, not anywhere in the world! GOD IS GOING TO HAVE TO INTERVENE VERY SOON!

It has been a year of increasing divorce, family breakdowns--increasing crime, increasing evils! It's time to pray, "THY KINGDOM COME!"

The year got off to a start--January 3rd--of Satan's most massive blow of persecution so far in his attempt to destroy the Church of the Living God.

But the Lord Jesus Christ had moved in advance to protect us. He had maneuvered circumstances to move me out of California and into Tucson, Arizona. Think what would have happened had I still been in Pasadena. Immediately I sent out a letter to all members and co-workers in an emergency appeal for funds for legal defense. The court-appointed Receiver stopped the letter from going out at the Pasadena Post Office. Immediately I sent another letter, from another post office, with funds to be mailed to me in Tucson where the Receiver could not get his hands on it.

Had I still been in Pasadena, this would not have been possible, and had I sent out a second letter, I would have been imprisoned for Contempt

of Court. In Tucson, California judges could not get to me, and I have been free to continue the Work from here, unmolested by this massive government attack.

God always TIMES things just right. On January 4th, the Receiver went to our bank, and the bank stopped all our credit. Actually we owed the bank some 3½ million dollars, and if God's timing had not been ON TARGET, we would have been BANKRUPT on January 4th.

But ON THAT VERY DAY, the proceeds from the sale of the Ambassador campus in England, in round figures \$3½ million, arrived at our bank, having been transferred from England. The bank took the \$3½ million--but saved us from bankruptcy and left us solvent.

The second letter--after the Pasadena Post Office stopped the first one--brought immediate results to Tucson, where it was banked out of reach of the Deceiver--I mean Receiver.

Customarily, we have annually borrowed \$1 million at our Los Angeles bank at the beginning of January, and paid it back out of spring Holy Day offerings. Also we have annually borrowed another million about July, paying it back out of fall Holy Day offerings.

This year God blest us with an increased income so that we did not have to borrow either one of those millions. We would have been unable, after the Attorney General's invasion, of course, but God foresaw that and provided those millions in regular income.

Don't tell me God's Word doesn't mean what it says in Philipians 4:19, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Just THINK how God has supplied the NEED of His Church this year! The income has shown an increase over the preceding year to just about equal the amount of inflation! PRAISE GOD for His wonderful goodness to His people whom He is using in His Work!

This has been a year of SETTING GOD'S CHURCH AND COLLEGE BACK ON GOD'S TRACK!

Now what of 1980?

God's Work will LEAP AHEAD AT ACCELERATING PACE. Time is growing short. God knows that better than we. And, as we get OURSELVES and His Church back on the track, getting ourselves CLOSER TO HIM and HIS WILL, His blessings on His Church will rapidly INCREASE! EXPECT IT!

He has opened the doors to nations to take Christ's Gospel Message of THE KINGDOM OF GOD as a witness to all nations. No power can close it!

The most successful visit to government heads at Peking, China, has opened other doors--among them an invitation to visit North Korea and other nations, including RUSSIA!

God has now opened the door to government heads of the USSR. Also to Czechoslovakia, and Poland. A visit is now planned to Cairo, Jerusalem, Poland, possibly Czechoslovakia, and to Moscow about late April and early May.

But I must add, the rapid growth in the POWER of this Work depends more upon YOUR PRAYERS, and your closeness to GOD and to Christ our Savior, than on anything else. Relay this on to your congregations. And THANK AND PRAISE GOD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE AND GUIDANCE THIS YEAR!

The PLAIN TRUTH REJUVENATED

We expect The PLAIN TRUTH to take on new life, and circulation to soar to 3 million or past during 1980.

Dr. Herman L. Hoeh has been put back on the staff as Senior Editor. Dexter Faulkner, who has done such an excellent job as Managing Editor of the GOOD NEWS and the WORLDWIDE NEWS will also become Managing Editor of The PLAIN TRUTH. He will add to his staff whatever he needs in layout and graphics.

The PLAIN TRUTH is completely unique in the magazine field. No other publication is like it. Nor is it expected to be a carbon copy of this world's mass circulation magazines whether news magazines, human interest, or other.

As Ambassador College is once more GOD'S College, so The PLAIN TRUTH, unlike any other, is GOD'S magazine.

Ambassador College is once more ACCREDITED! It was accredited before--with GOD'S accreditation, until one I had hoped would come along in his father's footsteps as Christ's chosen, wanted the accreditation of Satan's world. I never did want that, and now I think we have been saved from it--for good!

We need to realize this entire worldwide Work is unlike any other activity on earth. It is the Work of the Living GOD! In almost every department, men entrusted with department management have wanted and worked with a will to make their departments LIKE THOSE OF THIS WORLD.

Years ago I put a man in charge of the business and financial activities. Immediately he embarked on a campaign of "self improvement" by studying books on this world's systems of business management. Soon his department was crowded with multiple personnel, far more than needed, many with little to do. This tendency spread to other departments.

Men began coming to work around 9:30 or 10 in the morning, going to lunch before 12, and not bothering to come back until 2 or 2:30. If I tried to call an employee on the telephone around 4, he already had left for the day.

It became fashionable for department managers to congregate with the Executive V.P. in the faculty locker room, where refrigerators were kept stored with beer, wine and snacks. They would socialize, telling stories, and too often dirty jokes, while their wives were alone at home with the children until around 7 or 8.

I am only now discovering many POLICIES set WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OR AUTHORITY from me or from the Board of Directors, regarding days off, retirement, termination compensation, and other policies.

NEVER did I delegate authority to set policies--only authority to ADMINISTER policies set by me and the Board.

But this has become a big, worldwide multiple million-dollar enterprise. It is an utter impossibility for any one man Christ has chosen to manage every department and every detail within every department. I have had to delegate limited responsibilities.

Years ago Jon Hill started pressuring me to establish our own enlarged printing plant to print The PLAIN TRUTH and all our publications. There were two main arguments: 1) the work would be much improved, because Church members would put their whole hearts into it and be more conscientious, and 2) it was going to save us 10% or more. I did believe the first argument, but I insisted it would cost us 10% more--not save us 10%. I was WRONG on the 1st argument, and right on the 2nd.

To my great sorrow I learned a costly lesson. Some have merely "joined" the Church--not being really converted as I had supposed. Human nature was still with them. They still were on the "GETTING" way of life--not Christ's "GIVING" way. To my great sorrow, I had to learn that, even in the Church, many who are GETTING their living on salary from the Church, still live by the "GETTING" standard, not God's way of "GIVING." The more they GET the more they want--and when they get it they are never satisfied, but want more.

A Vice-President for Financial and Business Affairs installed a local commissary store so our brethren could save on store purchases. He brought his own son, then an ordained minister "in the field" with his own church, in to run it. First, it served only that small part of our membership that lived in the Pasadena area. Second, they did not really save. Third, they felt much more free to complain, gripe and grouch than they would at a worldly commercial store. It became a real headache. I closed it!

We employed many men in the printing plant in Pasadena, beside others in plants in England and in Australia. And was that a headache--especially in Pasadena. I tried one manager after another. I had to put another top man full time on the job as "trouble-shooter" at the printing plant, to keep peace among men supposed to be brethren in Christ.

I have found that nearly all the TROUBLES among our membership have come from those employed--those GETTING their salaries from God's Church. We have had little trouble and very few problems with lay brethren who GIVE offerings and PAY tithes to God's Church.

More and more, as I advance in years (of experience) I learn that the BIG dividing line between the TRUE people of God--the truly converted--and those who profess a conversion they do not really live, is the dividing line between "GIVE" and "GET." The "GIVE" way of life is GOD'S WAY--that of God's LAW of outflowing LOVE. The "GET" way is that of Satan--GET, be lustful and greedy, cultivate vanity and pride of SELF, be jealous and envious, turn to resentment and bitterness, be COMPETITIVE, always trying to GET--and in the case of too many employees, GET more from God's Church.

For years I maintained a policy of never checking records to see who tithed faithfully and who didn't. Then through other avenues word came to me that even certain ministers on payroll--GETTING from the Church--were not paying tithes or GIVING offerings. Jesus Christ KNOWS who is cheating

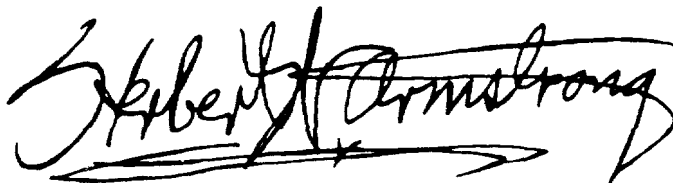
God, and as His chosen apostle I finally decided I needed to know in certain cases reportedly not giving or tithing. So I ordered a check and found the information correct. Most of those who were dishonest with the God who fed them and supplied all their need are no longer in the ministry. I would much rather ENTRUST the responsibility of being honest in tithing and giving to the minister, and I hope there will be no occasion to check up again.

Yes, painfully, the year 1979 has been a year of "housecleaning." A small minimum of lay members have gone out in hostility, resentment and bitterness over imaginary wrongs, attracted by one disfellowshipped from high office. But their pastors have told me, in every case, that these were local troublemakers, and, like rotten apples in a crate, would only have rotted others next to them, and the "good apples" remaining feel a sense of relief and these churches now have PEACE, and are taking on NEW LIFE and INTEREST!

Everywhere I receive reports of NEW LIFE in the local churches! Now there is a feeling and spirit of PURPOSE and DEDICATION.

Not only in the U.S. and Canada, but around the world come heartening reports of renewed dedication, joyful INTEREST, increased attendance. New members are being baptized. Everywhere the Work is SURGING AHEAD!

DO YOU KNOW WHY? Christ has been putting His Church and College BACK ON THE TRACK! We are PRAYING MORE, and with more fervency and dedication. We are drawing CLOSER TO CHRIST, AND HE IS BLESSING THE WORK ACCORDINGLY!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert H. Armstrong". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'R' and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

CHINESE DELEGATION EXPRESSES APPRECIATION AT A.I.C.F. DINNER

Following is a Worldwide Church of God news release dated December 21. Mr. Kevin Dean, Mr. Armstrong's Personal Assistant and Information Officer, released it to the media following last week's visit of the Chinese delegation to Ambassador College and Southern California.

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, the humanitarian arm of Ambassador College, hosted a diplomatic corps of 16 Chinese delegates this past week in Pasadena. The delegation included university presidents, vice-presidents and members of the Ministry of Education.

Their four-day stay in the Southland culminated a four-week tour of colleges and universities throughout the United States.

While in the Southern California area the diplomats were cordially welcomed at USC, UCLA, Occidental College, Cal Tech, and Ambassador College.

Dr. Kuang, chairman of the delegation, at a dinner hosted by AICF's Executive Vice-President Stanley R. Rader, expressed appreciation to the California schools and delineated the goals of the People's Republic of China. "We are very impressed by what we have seen," he stated, "the accomplishments of the University of Southern California at Los Angeles, the California Institute of Technology's higher level of achievements in the technical fields, and the beauty and learning atmosphere of Ambassador." Dr. Kuang also praised Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Rader and the Foundation for its efforts toward world peace and for the establishment of better relations between nations. "The goals for China," Dr. Kuang continued, "are to achieve the affluence and industrial development in 20 years that the United States has achieved in 203 years."

The delegation will arrive in Tokyo, Japan Saturday and will be hosted by AICF. The group stated that they are excited about visiting educational institutions in Japan and were looking forward to seeing Mr. Rader this January when he returns to fulfill his third invitation to speak at the University of Peking.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

News From Fiji

3,570 responses were received from a month-long newspaper advertising program in Fiji. This promotion has almost trebled the size of our mailing list there. Our contract for the World Tomorrow broadcast in Fiji expired at the end of October, and the local Council of Churches has been agitating to have it permanently discontinued. During November we heard that the Fiji Broadcasting Commission agreed to continue the program for the rest of the year before making a further decision. There are good indications that they'll renew the contract for another year after that.

Philippines

Regional Director, Mr. Colin Adair, conducted a PLAIN TRUTH Lecture in Quezon City on November 10 in the evening. Sixty-six new people were present out of the total attendance of 179. At least four of the new people were interested in attending services. Mr. Adair conducted another PLAIN TRUTH Lecture in Davao City on November 17 and seventy-seven new people were present out of the total attendance of 133. A Bible Seminar (PT Lecture follow-up) was conducted the following day and eleven new people came; total attendance was fifty-seven.

The Philippines area of the Work is still enjoying a fine year-to-date increase of 26% despite a slight dip from last month's level of 28%.

Germany

The mail count for November proved to be very good. More regular mail came in this month than in any other month in 1979 and nearly twice as much as in November 1978. This is attributed to the larger volume of cards and letters in response to a full-page booklet ad in the special November issue of the PLAIN TRUTH. Present year-to-date mail income shows a stable 9.6% increase over last year.

FUTURE FESTIVAL SITES

We are currently working on festival site selection for 1980. Mr. Herbert Armstrong has approved the concept of selecting a sufficient number of sites to reduce excessive driving. We will be working toward limiting the driving distance to festival sites to approximately 300 miles. There may be some exceptions but we are striving to achieve this due to problems with fuel availability and spiraling costs.

Our expansion of sites for 1980 will probably be rather limited. However, if you have any recommendations for festival sites for the future, please submit any literature on convention facilities available in your area.

--Ellis LaRavia

Please read to your congregations:

YEAR END RECEIPTS

Year-end receipts for 1979 will be mailed the latter part of January. We will be mailing a separate receipt for Herbert W. Armstrong donations, a separate receipt for Worldwide Church of God donations, and a separate receipt for Ambassador College donations. These receipts should arrive in your mailbox within approximately two weeks of each other. The total of these separate receipts added together will show the amount you gave the Work of God for 1979.

Any donations sent to Tucson and made payable to the Worldwide Church of God will appear on the Worldwide Church of God receipt.

Should you have any questions after receiving the year-end receipts, feel free to call us toll free at (800)-423-4444. Those living in California, Alaska, or Hawaii should call (213) 577-5225.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

WHY R. R. DONNELLEY WAS SELECTED TO PRINT THE PLAIN TRUTH AND QUEST

Many people have asked, over the last 3 or 4 years, why we placed the printing of the Plain Truth and Quest with R. R. Donnelley and Sons. We think it would be good to put on record some of the reasons why this was done.

1. R. R. Donnelley's price for printing and mailing the Plain Truth is the best price out of the other three printers who were investigated and asked to bid on the job. This is largely due to the fact that R. R. Donnelley has an interest in the paper-making industry which enables them to keep prices lower.

2. R. R. Donnelley has a very fine management philosophy. They determined many years ago not to print anything that could be classed as morally degrading, i.e. no pornography. We did not want to see our publication being produced alongside such filth or even to support firms that printed it.
3. R. R. Donnelley is a fine old established printing company, producing work of consistent high quality; they are also the largest printing company in the world which gives us the benefit of vast resources in both capacity and know-how, plus tremendous flexibility in production methods.
4. R. R. Donnelley's management identifies very strongly with the concept of the Church and the Foundation. They want our type of business and consider us a very desirous customer. This is important because if a printing company's management believes in us as a customer, they are more inclined to make a success of our printing.
5. R. R. Donnelley has the machine capacity to give the Plain Truth an excellent printing and mailing schedule which they have held consistently. Their schedule was the shortest of the many printers we talked to.
6. R. R. Donnelley is totally non-union. They do not have strikes. They do not have union representation in any of their plants across the United States. They have no labor troubles because they listen to their men, they pay well and the working conditions are good.
7. R. R. Donnelley is one of the finest companies in America at handling newsstand distribution of magazines. This is very important to us because of our massive newsstand distribution program.
8. The geographic location of R. R. Donnelley in Glasgow, Kentucky, makes them ideally suited for the printing and distribution of our publications. This is important both for newsstand and through the post office for the mailing of our magazines. Their central location in the United States saves us 3-4 days in the mail plus many days and dollars in newsstand distribution.
9. R. R. Donnelley has the capacity to expand to several millions of copies very easily because they are one of the few companies in the United States with good experience in very long-run Rotogravure printing. At the moment we are printing with Web Offset which has the capacity for only 2 million before Rotogravure becomes more cost-effective.
10. Because of the foregoing, we believe we have greater price security, job consistency and service potential at R. R. Donnelley than any other companies that we investigated and who were eventually asked to bid.

We are constantly reviewing our position to insure the very best for the Work at all times.

MAIL COMMENTSCorrespondents Address a Variety of Topics

This week's comments are made up of miscellaneous letters that cover a variety of subjects. We felt that they are worthwhile because of their thought-provoking content.

--Mail Processing Center

Returning to Church

I wanted to share some of my happiness with you. In March of 1975, my husband and I were baptized by one of God's ministers. For some time, we grew in the spirit. After a few years went by though, we separated ourselves from the Church. We quit giving our tithes and soon we even quit attending Sabbath services. Needless to say, we cut ourselves off from God's blessings and left ourselves open for everything that Satan could sling at us. Just as you have been saying for years, Satan would like nothing better than to see the "family" shot to pieces.

Just as I came to realize how wrong I had been to separate myself from God, my husband decided that he wanted a divorce. I went before God, repented of having gone a path that I knew for a fact was wrong. I'm sorry to say my husband went through with the divorce.

It hasn't been easy disciplining myself when it comes to Bible study, prayer and fasting, sometimes actually having to force myself to kneel and pray. I'm now on my way back to recovery from a long spiritual illness. I ask for your prayers for my children and myself. It's really hard being a single parent.

--F. G. (Texas)

Cheerful Giving

This is such a privilege for me to be able to contribute my small amount to God's Work. When a person only has money every now and then, and can't be a regular tither, it makes one appreciate more the privilege of being able to give at all.

--Mrs. B. Randolph (Bakersfield, CA)

Teenager Concerned About Satan's Influence

Being 18 I think I can offer a suggestion that may help others my age. Satan is really after the Church of God and its human leader and apostle, Mr. Armstrong, but I had no idea that Satan, archenemy of the Almighty God and Ruler of the universe, was also after me!

I think as teens we feel that our parents are in the church and I am and boy I'm doing o.k., not realizing that our invisible enemy is working ways to get you out of the church, thus away from the defenses offered by God and given over to a "strong delusion."

Yes, I knew that I would have trials and problems, and that Satan's broadcasting does affect us. However, to my thinking, I wasn't important enough to be of concern to Satan. But since growing up,

I've realized that yes, Satan is after each of us, individually, as well as collectively! I really feel this should be ingrained in the teen-agers' minds.

--Timothy R. Murphy (Plattsmouth, NE)

Thankful for Blessing of Children

Sitting in church last Sabbath during the blessing of the children, I got to thinking and remembering when our children were blessed in Big Sandy years ago and thankful for this service. Although our children are grown now, I know God has been looking over them all these years.

Almost a year ago (Nov. 24th, 78) our youngest daughter, Rebekah, who at that time was 20 years old, was kidnapped by an escaped convict. As it turned out, all he wanted was a ride to the home of his family. We know that God was with her at the time. And I believe this blessing of the children is a vital service of the church. It is really needed to protect our children from so much in this world.

--Mrs. Delores Abrell (Indianapolis, IN)

End Time Prophecy Unfolding

It is obvious now to anyone that understands prophecy, that God is no longer holding back events prophesied to take place in the near future. Listening to the news is like reading Daniel 8. I just hope it is over fast so that God's Kingdom can be set up and we can all live in peace.

--Diane Heller (Jacksonville, FL)

There have been so many significant developments in the world recently--the Pope's visit and his other travels, and now especially in the Middle East and Israel. It is really shocking but we cannot help but realize we are nearing the end of this system and there seems to be deterioration on every side.

--Miss Morva Atthowe (Berkeley, CA)