

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

This past Thursday, August 22, Mr. Leon Walker came to my office to report that he had just learned that one of our ministers in South America had been shot. Mr. Reginald Killingley, pastor of the Lima and Huaraz, Peru congregations, had been robbed and shot about 30 minutes earlier. Mr. Killingley had just withdrawn money for a second tithe subsidy from a Lima bank and was on his way home when the robbery occurred. Mr. Walker and I decided that he should travel to Peru as soon as possible to be with Mr. Killingley. After his arrival in Lima, Mr. Walker related more details of the robbery and Mr. Killingley's condition.

Not realizing he had been shot (he saw neither blood nor a bullet hole in his sweater), Mr. Killingley ran to a nearby maternity hospital to call the police. It was there that he noticed he was having difficulty breathing, and was taken to the emergency room.

He was then transferred to the Anglo-American Hospital in Lima, where doctors inserted a tube in his thorax to help drain fluids from his lung. The bullet had deflected off one of his ribs, punctured his right lung and lodged in his right armpit. On August 27 the tube and the bullet were removed. Mr. Killingley is expected to recover completely, and to be released from the hospital in early September.

We are all very thankful to God for His intervention and mercy in what could have been a tragedy. Once again, this points up the need to be diligently praying for God's protection for one another. Many of our fellow ministers live and work in extremely dangerous areas and situations all around the world. Of course, there is no place on earth that can be considered really safe. God's people, especially His ministers, are targets for Satan the devil wherever they may live. Let's thank God for the protection He has given Mr. Killingley, and continue to earnestly pray for God's safekeeping and preservation of His ministers as they go about doing the work He has given them.

On another subject, Mr. Armstrong has discussed with me a few principles regarding fasting on the Day of Atonement that I want to share with you as we approach the fall festival season. As you know, the Bible teaches we are to fast on the Day of Atonement, abstaining from both food and water for 24 hours. Most members are able to observe this festival without adversely affecting their health. In fact, the physical benefits from the fast are likely to improve their health.

However, we live in a degenerate age and a total fast may cause serious repercussions for some individuals with long-standing health problems such as diabetes. For this reason, God's Church believes the Bible does allow some exceptions for liquid nourishment on the Day of Atonement. For example, if a diabetic must take insulin on Atonement to maintain proper body functions, he or she may also take whatever amount of juice is necessary to prevent insulin shock.

This principle would also apply to women who are breast-feeding children. Most mothers do not find it difficult to breast-feed while fasting. A mother's milk may become depleted toward the end of the day, but will return when she resumes eating normal meals. Mothers should prepare for the fast by making sure they eat nutritiously the day before, not skipping any meals. However, a few mothers find that they are barely able to produce enough milk even on days when they are eating and drinking normally. Their milk production might cease if they were to completely fast. In such cases, water is all that is usually necessary to continue milk production while abstaining from solid food for a day. The need to take liquids should be a real one and not an excuse to avoid a complete fast.

The ministry should counsel privately with those individuals having special needs, emphasizing the fact that the Day of Atonement is a fast day. It should also be emphasized that the individual should carefully consider his or her motives and attitude to be sure they are pleasing in God's sight, because God looks on the heart. But let the individual know it is possible, in some cases, to take a little nourishment on Atonement and still keep it as a day of affliction in God's sight.

The ministry should not tell any members with serious health problems what they should or should not do on Atonement. Each member must make his or her own decision in the matter. Any questions having to do with health should be directed to a licensed MD. The ministry should simply teach the meaning of this festival while realizing there may be a few rare exceptions where a small amount of liquid nourishment would be proper in God's sight. This is in keeping with Christ's statement in the latter part of Matthew 23:23.

International News

From Mr. Dibar Apartian We have much good news in the July report from the French-speaking areas of God's Work!

- La PURE VERITE subscription list reached an all-time high with 174,047 subscribers, up 34% over July 1984.
- "White mail" January through July totaled 31,750 letters, up 46% over the same period last year.
- Regular mail for the year to date has increased 45.5% with 62,143 pieces of mail received.
- Outgoing mail through July rose to 331,934 items, not counting the PV, an increase of 62% over 1984. (The above mail figures do not include French Canada.)
- The French GOOD NEWS, including French Canada, shot up to 24,191 subscribers, an increase of 120.8%. We have had a very encouraging 34% response from PV subscribers who received offers to subscribe to the French GN.
- Members, including French Canada, now total 1,432, up 7.6% over 1984.

- Income from tithes and offerings through the first half of 1985 grew 11.3%.

Recently, the doors have opened before us in Quebec City and four cities in the Abitibi region, about 1,500 kilometers northwest of Montreal. Mr. Armstrong's television program subtitled in French will be aired in Quebec City on CFEM channel 10 and channel 13 at 9 a.m., and on CKRN channel 4 at 8 a.m. each Sunday.

And our radio broadcast "Le MONDE A VENIR" will air on a network of stations in northwestern Quebec province known as "Radio Nord." The following stations will broadcast our program at 8:45 a.m. each Sunday: CKRN 1400 in Rouyn; CKLS 1240 in La Sarre; CHAD 1340 in Amos; CKVD 900 in Val d'Or.

The results of our first use of direct mail in France are now mostly complete. We mailed 138,734 letters from the U.K. near the end of June, and received, as of August 12, 4,800 responses--a response rate of 3.5%. Our overall cost per response was 5½ pounds, or about \$7.65.

We learned from this experience that a blank window envelope with no over-printed attracting message pulled significantly lower than other mail packages used. We also discovered that the subscribers of science-oriented or intellectual magazines were our weakest responders.

Our best pullers were mailing lists of investment newsletters and magazines on finance and economics from a practical point of view. Perhaps those on these lists were interested in looking for tips and trends.

This year's French SEP camp, which ended July 28, was again held at Morhange in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. The 67 campers and 23 staff members, including Ambassador College students who were in France for the French summer program, enjoyed good weather and fair skies.

The activities included archery, sailing, windsurfing, swimming, tennis, horseback riding, soccer, bicycling, woodburning, kayaking and a forest adventure.

The campers also had five classes (1 hour 45 minutes each), in which the seven laws of success, the importance of the family, what the World Tomorrow will be like, and the campers' roles in the Kingdom of God were discussed.

The mayor of Morhange visited the camp and was very impressed with our organization. He gave us his full support, granting free access to the camp site, loan of a freezer, two sinks, kitchen materials and regular servicing of the sanitation blocks by municipal employees, as well as the local gendarmerie for security. The French army also helped by loaning tables, drums and camp beds.

A newspaper reporter visited the camp and wrote an excellent article about us, praising the quality of the camp and the character of our campers. Even the local citizens of Morhange helped out in many ways. We are pleased that the SEP camp at Morhange was very warmly welcomed.

--Joseph Tkach, Ministerial Services

YOU UPDATEApplications for Winter Educational Program in Austria

Applications for the first Winter Educational Program (WEP) in Saalbach, Austria, will be available September 1. The program will be open to all YOU members ages 13 through 18. Ninety YOU members from the United States and Canada will join 80 students from Europe in activities such as downhill and cross-country skiing, ice-skating, curling and tobogganing. Details are as follows:

The cost is 1,128 U.S. dollars. This includes room and board, ski rental and lift tickets, two YOU sweaters, and round trip airfare from New York, Chicago, Los Angeles or Dallas to Saalbach, Austria. Departure is December 19, with a return date of January 1, 1986. Also, for those who wish to purchase ski equipment, a local ski dealer in Austria has made available a complete ski package consisting of Head skis, Salomon boots, bindings and poles for \$150.00. Complete details are listed on the application.

Applications will be mailed to larger church areas only. If someone in a smaller church area is interested, please contact the YOU Office in Pasadena to obtain an application. Applications should be postmarked no later than October 1.

--Kevin O. Dean, YOU

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSING

Over the past few weeks, we have been reporting a great deal of statistical information to you. We hope we're not overburdening you with facts and figures. However, Mr. Armstrong wants you to be informed about what is happening, and the outstanding growth we're experiencing.

TV Calls Pass the Half-million Mark

"The WORLD TOMORROW" program has now brought in 502,188 calls year to date. This is a 50% increase over the same period last year! In 1984, we did not reach 500,000 TV calls until December. If the present trend continues, the final figure for 1985 should exceed 800,000.

Graph of TV Calls Highlights Record Summer

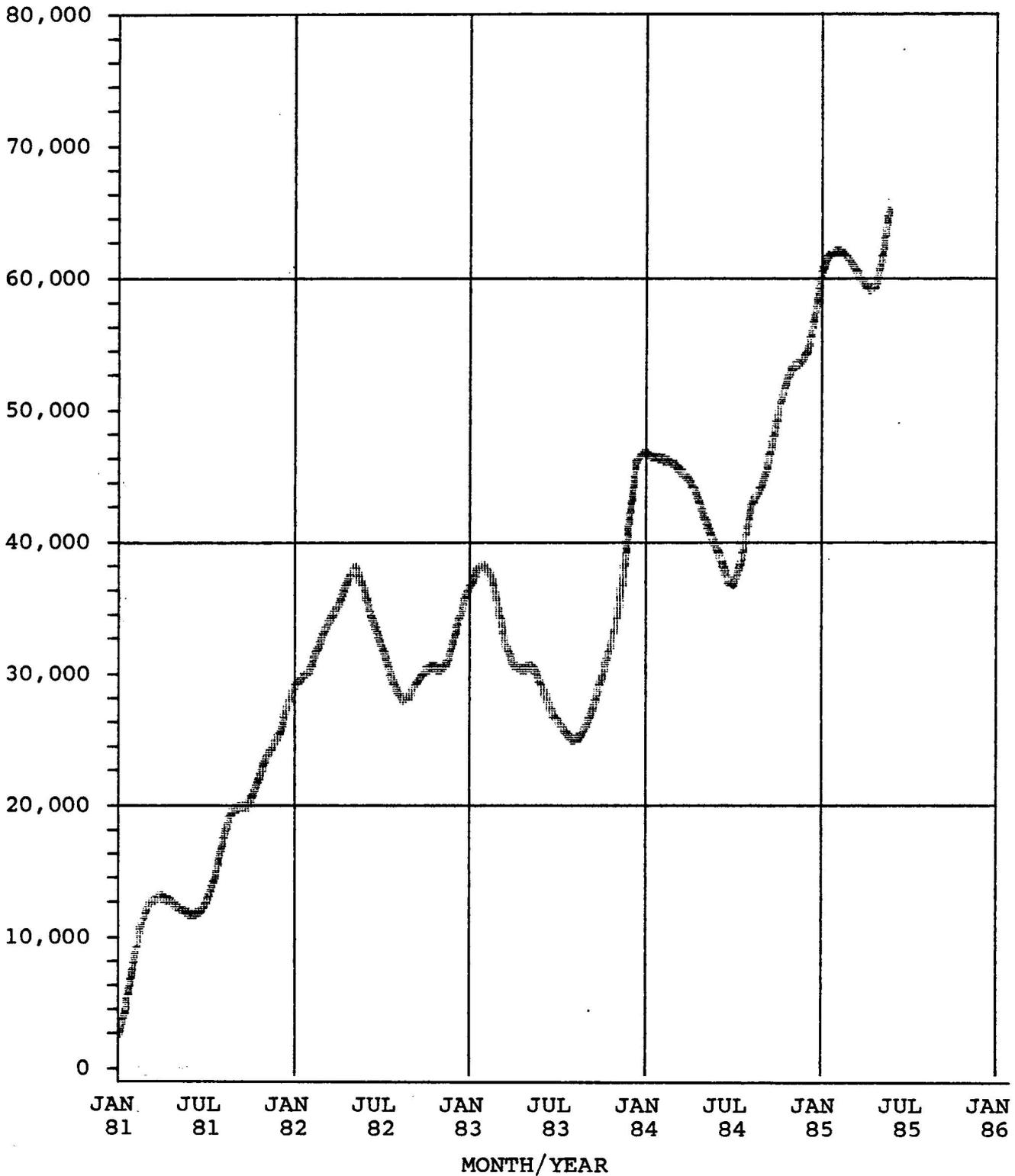
The graph on page 5 clearly shows the phenomenal growth in the number of TV calls we have received in response to the telecast each month since January 1981. Note that substantial dips occurred during previous summers. However, after a slight drop during the spring of this year, calls increased sharply.

July set another new record--72,793 TV calls received in one month. By contrast, we received 48,073 in July 1984.

TV CALLS RECEIVED EACH MONTH IN THE U.S.

JAN 1981-JUL, 1985

TV CALLS



Early Showing of Toll-free Number Proving Very Effective

Since the toll-free number is now being shown on the screen several minutes before it is announced, thousands of additional callers have been able to reach us. We now receive two waves of calls instead of one. This change has added approximately 15,000 calls during the past two months, and was an important factor in our recent record-breaking counts.

Multiple Thousands Turn to Mr. Armstrong for Answers and Advice

More and more PLAIN TRUTH subscribers are writing to Mr. Armstrong for advice about spiritual matters and problems in their personal lives. These letters are directed to the Personal Correspondence Department for help and encouragement. An average of 300 letters are received each working day. The following are some of the major categories we are asked to respond to:

- Religion

Many people are confused about religion because of the great variety of sects and denominations with conflicting beliefs. Mr. Armstrong's dynamic, straightforward and clear message impresses them. They look to him to help clear up their confusion.

A recent letter contained this comment: "I feel lost and need spiritual help. Mr. Armstrong speaks as if the Lord is speaking to him. I never heard the truth spoken with such accuracy and power.... Please don't disregard this begging for help."

Many others ask for a statement of Worldwide Church of God beliefs or for an evaluation of or comparison to other religions.

- Personal Problems

Since our publications frequently emphasize the family, we receive many requests for advice about solving personal problems and improving family relations. For example, parents often ask how to teach their children about God and His purpose for mankind. Many feel helpless and ask for God's intervention. One man was so depressed because of financial and family problems that he said, "It would have been a blessing if I had 'got it' in Vietnam." Homosexuals and drug addicts have earnestly requested help on how to overcome their sinful lifestyles.

- Unhappy Marriages

Numerous letters show that a great many marriages are floundering and failing. Unfaithfulness, abuse and other sins are rampant in countless marriages and much suffering results. We frequently read of marriages in which a mate is unloving, unsupportive, disinterested and unfaithful.

One man recently wrote: "Presently my life is in shambles. My wife left me and is divorcing me. She is involved in a relationship with another man, who has been married and divorced three times and was treated for a nervous breakdown. We have two small sons, ages 7 and 3½. Please advise me. I do not know what to do. I am sickened by these recent events in my life."

Many women write in seeking help for their alcoholic husbands. One recently wrote: "Pray for my husband. He is not a Christian. He is an alcoholic and he needs God."

- Poor Health and Illness

Sickness and chronic health problems plague many people who write in. A man who contracted AIDS from a blood transfusion asked for our prayers. His wife left him and everyone in his family turned their backs on him because of his disease and the social stigma attached to it.

- Senior Citizens

The elderly are often beset by multiple troubles such as health problems, diminishing savings and abandonment by their children. Many are living out their last days in convalescent homes. They relate their fears of being alone and that no one really cares for them.

As the above problems show, the need for God's Kingdom has never been greater. With Christ ruling on earth, we will be able to teach people everywhere the solutions to their problems and the way that leads to happiness and abundant well-being.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

SPY SCANDAL ROCKS BONN; GERMANS AND THE LAW; GROWING PARIS-BONN AXIS; "POST-NATO" EUROPE; RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN EASTERN EUROPE

West Germany is in the throes of perhaps the most damaging spy scandal ever in its history. Names of those spying for East Germany are being released almost daily. The biggest catch in the net so far is Hans Joachim Tiedge, former head of the Bonn intelligence unit that kept track of East German spies roaming around the Federal Republic. He disappeared, then turned up in East Berlin seeking asylum. Was he a recent convert to the other side (perhaps trapped because of his heavy drinking and past marital problems), or had he been a "mole" for nearly two decades?

Bonn fears it may have to reconstruct its intelligence operations from the ground up. And Bonn's allies are fearful that Tiedge, having broad access to NATO intelligence links, may have jeopardized the whole alliance. Heads are beginning to roll in the unfolding affair, but Chancellor Helmut Kohl, said to be infuriated at the findings, seems secure for the moment. Josef Joffe, foreign editor of the SUEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG in Munich, explains both how serious the current affair is, and the tremendous disadvantage Bonn has in the spy-versus-spy business relative to its German Communist counterpart. He wrote in the August 28 LOS ANGELES TIMES:

Tiedge is the biggest fish that the East German State Security Service has landed in a generation.... What we do not know yet is whether Tiedge was a "mole" or a turncoat. If he was a mole who had burrowed into the intelligence system years ago, it would explain why the West Germans have not scored any notable suc-

cesses against their Communist compatriots during the last four years. It also would explain why the East Germans could proudly announce that they had caught 168 West German spies during the past 12 months....

Whether Tiedge was a mole or a traitor, the damage is gargantuan. With his arrival in East Berlin, the West German network in East Germany was "burned" in toto. Now, during his debriefing, there are lots of other choice presents that he surely will deliver, such as the ways and means of other Western intelligence services, which he learned in regular top-secret conferences....

In the end there's not much that can be done to forestall further such disasters. The Federal Republic...is spy heaven. Before the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, 3 million East Germans escaped to the Western half. Today thousands come across legally every year, and they are West German citizens from Day One. They look like West Germans, they speak like West Germans....

How many of them will re-emerge in East Berlin tomorrow as proud servants of the Peasant and Worker State?... It is easy to be a spy when all you have to do is cross from Germany into Germany, and then into the most liberal political system that the Germans have ever known.

In espionage, the East Germans will win hands down every time. Because of the Nazi period, West German society is regulated by stringent civil liberty regulations, the kind that East German authorities don't have to contend with. One cannot help but think that someday, someone will demand that individual liberties be constrained in the national interest! This brings us to another article about West German life titled "West Germans Do It All by the Book," written by Tyler Marshall in the June 5 LOS ANGELES TIMES. It gives a good insight into the German character, reformed only slightly by liberal democracy. The article packs a wallop at the end:

Intricate, often petty regulations and laws...envelop nearly every West German.... It is something that sets modern West Germany apart from other Western democracies. Today, federal West German law regulates when a homeowner can cut his lawn, the angle of the staircase inside his home and the number of wall plugs allowed in his bedroom. The mountain of rules governing housing construction has become legendary, with 660 separate regulations spanning about 8,000 pages of detailed, turgid German bureaucratism governing just the interior construction....

"German bureaucracy stifles individual initiative," charged Ralf Dahrendorf, a prominent political figure here in the early 1970s, who recently returned to West Germany after 10 years as head of the London School of Economics.

Even in the most personal family matters, such as the name for a new baby, government regulations define the limits.... A Frankfurt couple who wanted to name their child after the Peanuts character, Schroeder, went to court after city officials refused to register the baby's name. The family lost. A superior court judge backed the bureaucrats' assessment that Schroeder was a

last name and therefore not permitted under West German regulations as a first name.

A couple in the Ruhr city of Moenchengladbach last November were prevented by a similar court ruling from naming their son Hemingway. "You have to understand that there are certain rules here," the director of the Bonn city Registry Office, Rudolf Buechner, explained to a foreign visitor. "Names help create a certain order," he added. "If a name is on a list and nobody knows if it's a man or a woman, then difficulties can arise."...

Many believe the West German penchant for over-regulation has deep cultural roots. "It is a very old story here, a Prussian tradition," said Dahrendorf, recalling that even Germany's industrial revolution was organized from the top by the government and large banks, not by freewheeling entrepreneurs as in Britain and the United States. "There is a long tradition here of not relying on the individual," he added. "When anything happens, there is a tendency to invent a new law to regulate it."

In an effort to counter the growing mountain of laws and regulations, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's center-right coalition government has established an independent commission for simplifying judicial and administrative procedures.... But reshaping German public consciousness won't be easy.... German mothers, for example, sometimes invent their own "laws" to control their children. One...mother routinely coaxes her son from the television set each evening with the warning that it is against the law for little children to watch TV after 8 p.m.

While other countries also have numerous laws dealing with petty subjects, officials' dedication towards enforcement of the rules helps set West Germany apart.... It was apparently a...desire to carry out the letter rather than the spirit of the law that led Bonn police officers to issue stern warnings to pedestrians who violated the "don't walk" traffic signals around the federal Parliament during the recent economic summit--even though the area had been blocked off to traffic.

"During my first weeks back here, I was amused by it all, but it is beyond a joke," said Dahrendorf. "It is the type of thing that could make the country stand at attention again if the wrong person came along."

The above article reminded me of what Herman L. Hoeh said a few weeks ago when some of us were discussing the differing approaches various nations have toward law. It goes something like this: In the United States, whatever is not expressly prohibited is permitted. In Germany, on the other hand, whatever is not expressly permitted is forbidden. And in the Soviet Union, even what is permitted is often forbidden.

On the issue of European defense, an important trend may be in the initial stages of development. A very significant article appeared in the August 5 European edition of NEWSWEEK titled "An End to 'Fortress France'?: French

politicians call for greater defense cooperation with West Germany." This article did not appear in the U.S. edition. Here are key excerpts:

Ever since Charles de Gaulle pulled France out of the military wing of NATO in 1967, French military strategy has focused on protecting France's own borders. Now, however, the era of "Fortress France" may be coming to an end. In recent weeks French politicians of all stripes, except the beleaguered Communists, have endorsed the notion of defending West Germany if war breaks out.

Last month French Defense Minister Charles Hernu told his West German counterpart, Manfred Worner, that Paris now believed their two countries "had security interests in common." Former President Valery Giscard D'Estaing's center-right UDF group declared that France's "frontier of independence is on the Elbe," not the Rhine....

According to the new strategy, in the event of war the 46,000-man French rapid-action force would mobilize. Within hours its helicopters would reach the front. The 50,000 French troops already based in West Germany would then abandon their defense positions and move forward to reinforce them. Still, even under the best of circumstances, the proposed reconciliation will have its limits. French officials say there will be no earth-shattering public announcement, such as an extension of the country's nuclear umbrella to cover West Germany, and Bonn's NATO commitments will still take first priority. But the change will present important new opportunities for broader European military cooperation. "If France and Germany have a common strategy, then a European defense becomes possible," says Andre Brigot of the Institut Francais de Polemologie, a strategic think tank....

France, in particular, has had good reasons for wanting to improve cooperation on defense. In the French view, the outpouring of pacifist sentiment over the installation of U.S. cruise missiles was an unsettling indication of West Germany's sometimes tenuous loyalties to the concept of Western solidarity.... In his new book, "The Future of War," Pierre Lellouche, a NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL columnist and associate director of the Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI), argues that France has an obligation, out of self-interest if nothing else, to contribute to West Germany's defense.... "There is widespread fear of what's going on in Germany," says Dominique Moisi, also of IFRI. "We cannot stay in our selfish nationalistic position. We must pay a price for Germany to stay in Europe."

Paying the price--literally--of protecting itself is becoming increasingly difficult for Paris. Some officials say privately that France simply can no longer afford an independent defense. By some estimates, conventional-force spending will plunge 25 percent by 1988.... "If we want to maintain a credible defense, we must cooperate with West Germany," says Moisi. "The political logic combines with the economic logic."

As we have reported before, there occasionally appears a significant article in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL advocating the gradual withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Western Europe, dissolution of NATO and its replacement with a joint European military force. Yet another of these articles appeared in the August 27 JOURNAL headlined "Toward a Post-NATO Europe." It was written by Jay Winik, past executive director of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. Here are key excerpts:

When NATO was founded in 1949, it was basically a unilateral American nuclear guarantee of European security in the guise of an alliance.... But with the advent of at least strategic parity, the U.S. nuclear commitment to defend Europe has been reduced to a pact of mutual suicide. It has lost much of its credibility....

The first step should be the gradual dissolution of the NATO alliance and the creation of an all-European Defense Community. Rather than be based on the negative goal of security, as NATO is today, this compact would articulate the historic goal of the emergence of a more politically vital Europe....

Concretely, the U.S. should consider phasing out its ground troops over a period of 10-15 years, except for a symbolic force in Berlin, and rescind its strategic nuclear guarantee. This will provide the Europeans with the necessary incentive to develop a credible deterrent, a task the U.S. should assist them in. While there can be no precise blueprint as to exactly what form a new European Defense Community would take, it would have to increase and reorganize its conventional forces as a minimum condition.

It should also consider developing a joint European deterrent that would build upon the mix of short- and long-range theater and submarine nuclear weapons currently in the NATO arsenal, the control of which would be turned over from the Americans exclusively to the Europeans....

In the final analysis, as Zbigniew Brzezinski has argued, only the Europeans can restore Europe, and American policy should give this goal concrete direction. A Europe that assumes a larger role in its defense, aided by the Americans, will of necessity be politically more responsible and capable of evolving into a world power in its own right....

Additionally, as a symbol of a rejuvenated Europe, this new alliance could support the larger goal of a united European cultural community, the heir to the continent's more than 1,000 years of common cultural and religious ideals. In the nuclear age, the division of Europe cannot be undone by force. But as University of London Prof. Hugh Seton-Watson noted shortly before his death last year, the fact that Eastern Europeans cannot now belong to an all-European economic or political community in no way diminishes how a culturally united Europe could fulfill many of the deeply felt aspirations of those living under the Soviet yoke.

Over time, the idea of a culturally united Europe could gather momentum, if not inevitability, and form the basis for fostering greater freedoms for the people of Eastern Europe. All possible opportunities to promote cultural contacts between East and West Europeans should be initiated, a point that was recently made by the pope in his latest encyclical. He emphasized the joint spiritual heritage of all Europeans as "one of the most solid reference points" for the continent's reunification.

The reference to Pope John Paul II concerned his recent encyclical Slavorum Apostoli, celebrating the missionary works of the two Middle-age Greek missionary brothers sent to the Slavic world, Cyril and Methodius. The Pope had wanted to celebrate the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Methodius by traveling to Velehrad, Czechoslovakia, said to be Methodius' place of death. Czech authorities refused to permit the trip. They also tried everything in their means to keep the crowds away (no refreshments, no public conveniences) but 100,000 turned up--and turned on to the occasion. Timothy Garton Ash reported on the event and the overall revival of religion in Eastern Europe in the July 20 issue of the British newsmagazine, THE SPECTATOR:

More than 100,000 people gathered in the Moravian village of Velehrad earlier this month, to mark the eleven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Methodius, the "apostle of the Slavs." They cheered the Pope's envoy, Cardinal Casaroli, and they booed Mr. Milan Klusak, the Culture Minister of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. When Mr. Klusak...spoke about the politico-cultural contribution of Cyril and Methodius to the construction of the socialist Czechoslovakia, the vast congregation insistently corrected him: "Saints Cyril and Methodius!" they shouted.

When the cardinal read a message from John Paul II, saying that he was with them in spirit and had hoped to be with them in person...the crowd raised a great cheer, and there were chants of "Long live John Paul II" and "We want the Pope!" It might almost have been Poland. It was said to be the largest religious assembly since the communists seized power, and the largest spontaneous gathering of any kind since the crushing of the Prague Spring....

If an old communist put to sleep 30 years ago were awoken today, the one feature of contemporary Eastern Europe which would surely amaze him most is the growing power of Christianity--in Czechoslovakia, despite the institutional crippling of the Churches in the 1950s, in Poland, obviously, in East Germany, where the Protestant Churches have a unique institutional strength, in Lithuania, in the Ukraine, and in Yugoslavia....

Why has this happened? One obvious answer is: the Polish Pope. Since his election in 1978, John Paul II has constantly harped on the theme of Europe's underlying spiritual unity, and the need to heal the great split between the Eastern and Western Churches.... Yet the religious revival throughout East Central Europe cannot simply be ascribed to the impact of one man in Rome....

The explanation must be sought, to use the crude terms of economics, on the demand as well as the supply side. And the great promoter of religious demand is, of course, communism. As Lech Walesa once remarked: "If you take the example of what we have in our shops, then...communism has done very little for us. But if you take the example of what we have in our souls, then I answer that communism has done a great deal for us. In fact our souls contain exactly the opposite of what they wanted. They wanted us not to believe in God, and our churches are full."...

To be sure, there are still many practising young communists; but even in East Germany I do not remember ever having met a believing one. In the 1970s this ideological failure was to a considerable extent covered up by a relative economic success-- but as the standard of living stagnates, or declines, material goods can no longer fill the ideological vacuum. Many young people seek in Christianity...an escape from this hopeless-seeming world of materialism without materials....

It inevitably leaves one wondering how deep the religious revival goes: running, as it does, dead against the seemingly ineluctable secularisation of the modern world. If the Red Army departed and East Central Europe was given democratic capitalism tomorrow, for how long would the churches remain full? To recall Walesa's remark: if there was more in the shops would there be less in their souls? Is that also part of the explanation of the relative weakness of Christianity in Hungary?

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau