

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



VOL. 5, NO. 14

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 8, 1983

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Updating Assistant PT Newsstand Coordinators

It has come to our attention that a number of pastors have been negligent in passing on the monthly Newsstand Newsletter to their assistant PLAIN TRUTH coordinators. Please realize that this newsletter contains extremely vital information which needs to be passed on to those who assist you in this important program.

The PLAIN TRUTH Circulation Department has informed us that currently many assistant coordinators are unaware of policy changes or other information that is necessary to perform their tasks. This breakdown in communication could easily be avoided if you would pass on the extra copy of the newsletter, marked "Assistant Coordinator's Copy," sent to you each month.

Remember that Mr. Armstrong is extremely excited and enthusiastic about the Newsstand Program. He expects it to measure up to the standards he has set for the Work worldwide. It is the Pastor's responsibility to see that this phase of God's Work is carried out successfully in his area. Your cooperation is essential and vital. Please pass on the above mentioned important communication tool to your assistant coordinator every month.

Comments From Monthly Church Reports

VANCOUVER, WA--HARRY E. SLEDER: I believe the pressure is on the Churches for spiritual growth like we haven't seen before. Some people seem to have their backs pushed right against the wall to make changes in their lives. Christ is bringing His Church along, preparing her to be His bride. Thanks to Mr. Armstrong for leading the way.

LONG BEACH, CA--LES McCOLM: Had a phone call from a man who left the Baptist church and, along with 29 others, has requested a visit. They keep the Sabbath on their own and have "elected" a minister to teach them out of The PLAIN TRUTH and other of our literature! These are exciting days to say the least.

HUNTSVILLE, AL--LAWSON J. TUCK: Mr. Armstrong's books, booklets and the CORRESPONDENCE COURSE are doing a superb job of educating those coming along. My thanks go to him and the whole Headquarters team!

ALBANY, NY--LYLE WELTY: We continue to receive a steady flow of new PMs due to the telecast. Quality of PMs is generally good. The excellent quality of GOOD NEWS articles is helping both members and PMs to grow.

MONTVALE, NJ--LLOYD BRIGGIE: Telecasts of Mr. Armstrong's overseas trips are tremendous. Members, PMs and new contacts have shown true gratitude for the wealth of free literature and education that come from Headquarters.

KENT, WA--J. RICHARD PARKER: Both members and PMs are inspired by Mr. Armstrong's telecasts. Personally, these broadcasts benefit me greatly in many ways.

ROCHESTER, NY--LESLIE SCHMEDES: Many of the members have been commenting on the strong witness that this nation is receiving via the broadcast and the telecast. Mr. Armstrong's health and well-being are uppermost in their thoughts and prayers.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Caution Regarding Supermarket Distribution of PT

As you already know, PLAIN TRUTH newsstand distribution will begin through the Good Neighbor Bulletin Board program in 541 supermarkets in the New York metropolitan area, beginning with the June issue.

At this time our contract does not include areas outside this region. Therefore, magazines should not be placed on Good Neighbor Bulletin Boards in supermarkets located in any other area.

As the opportunity arises to increase the number of supermarkets involved in this program, we will inform pastors where and when distribution is to begin. Until that time, distribution on the Good Neighbor Bulletin Boards outside the New York metropolitan area is prohibited. We would appreciate it if you would inform all the brethren involved in the Newsstand Program of this policy.

Letters From Newsstand PLAIN TRUTH Readers

We thought you would be interested in some of the letters we have received from readers who have picked up The PLAIN TRUTH from a newsstand or in a waiting room. We have also included a few comments from members who assist in distributing the magazine. Hope you enjoy them as much as we did!

I was in a local bookstore (in Englewood, Ohio) where I picked up two free sample copies of The PLAIN TRUTH. I found myself wrapped up in these magazines.

S.S. (Vandalia, OH)

Yesterday I had the pleasure of watching Mr. Armstrong for the first time. I was deeply moved. When he offered The PLAIN TRUTH, I took down all the necessary information. Later my family took a drive to East San Diego County. When we stopped at Dudley's Bakery, I was joyfully surprised to find the magazine there for the taking. I've read most of the articles and am thankful for the information it gives.

L.G. (San Diego, CA)

I will always be thankful for the day I sent my ten-year-old daughter to the Piggly-Wiggly store on Calhoren Avenue in Rome. She came out with The PLAIN TRUTH magazine. I asked her if she paid for it and she said no. I told her she knew better. She said, "Mamma, I didn't take it--it's free." I said, "Oh" and started to read. I couldn't stop.

E.A. (Rome, GA)

I am convinced God had a hand in guiding me to obtain my first copy of The PLAIN TRUTH from a newsstand in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I had been near this newsstand many times with no concern when this one day I just suddenly took a copy and began receiving the Good Word. God bless you.

L.P. (Shenandoah, IA)

I found your magazine in my beauty shop, of all places! I go there for a hair shampoo and set, because of a heart problem which makes it next to impossible to do myself. It attracted me so much that I took out the coupon to send in for a subscription of my own.

M.S. (Tucson, AZ)

I find The PLAIN TRUTH magazine is in bus stations all across America--and also in many stores and places of business. I grab The PLAIN TRUTH magazine just like a baby grabs candy. It sure does thrill my heart to read and study it.

D.B.

I recently picked up a copy of The PLAIN TRUTH at the University of Massachusetts.

P.E. (Northampton, MA)

We listen to your radio and television programs in the Miami area and find them very enlightening. We have also read copies of The PLAIN TRUTH which were in a stand at the Homestead Shopping Plaza.

H.T. (Miami Beach, FL)

I picked up The PLAIN TRUTH magazine one day on my way home from shopping at Krogers Grocery Store here in Shreveport. I really have learned a great deal from the magazines. They've helped a lot in the area of major relationships.

M.B. (Shreveport, LA)

I have enjoyed your magazines very much and am learning about life through the Bible. Seven months ago I was having my car serviced at Mingle's Automotive Store in Port Arthur, Texas. My eyes fell on your magazine and I read several interesting items. I look forward to each new one, with surprising issues of great importance to me.

M.B. (Beaumont, TX)

I went to Connecticut to visit my mother last October and upon departure from Bradley Airport, Hartford, was delighted to see a huge magazine rack of PLAIN TRUTHS offered to the people. I hope my small contributions are of some use--if only to help pay for the wonderful truths I have received.

P.W. (Round Lake, IL)

Thank you for sending me your wonderful PLAIN TRUTH magazine! I picked up my first copy in a tiny branch post office right here in St. Petersburg, Florida. After I finished reading it from cover to cover, I simply had to have more!

H.C. (St. Petersburg, FL)

I am a fourteen-year-old male. I first saw your PLAIN TRUTH magazine in a pizza shop in Pennsylvania, where I live. It was a free sample copy, so I took it home with me. Now I am a subscriber to The PLAIN TRUTH (for my parents) and YOUTH '83 (for myself).

C.C. (State College, PA)

Letters From Members Assisting in the Newsstand Program

I rejoice every time I see increased PLAIN TRUTH circulation figures in our WORLDWIDE NEWS. I became a PLAIN TRUTH representative following my baptism last year and am so grateful to God for the outlets He has allowed me to have a part in obtaining. We're distributing about four to five boxes each week and pray that God will continue to supply our needs to let the Work grow as He wants it.

B.B. (Kannapolis, NC)

The reason I'm writing to you now is because when the show, "Behind the Work, 1982" was shown there [Squaw Valley] I was shown among the almost 150 members who are taking part in the San Jose, California distribution of The PLAIN TRUTH magazine. The speaker said, "People from eight to 89 years took part." Well I am the one who is 89 years (just seven months younger than you!). I live in a retirement home in Redwood City and was given permission by the manager to put some magazines in various parts of the building. And they are picked up!--by whom, I do not know. There are some 175 residents here.

A.A. (Redwood City, CA)

I feel that God has truly blessed us and I am thankful for what God has given us. But the most precious blessing and gift of all is my calling and that of my family. I just wanted you to know, Mr. Armstrong, that we stand behind you and pray for you every day. I am enclosing a picture of my granddaughter, Lisa. She was helping me set up a new PLAIN TRUTH stand. I hope you enjoy the picture.

B.W. (Veneta, OR)

The PLAIN TRUTH Newsstand Program is going well here. They are being taken from the racks at a phenomenal rate. I'm beginning to wonder just how much longer the churches of this world will allow you to speak so powerfully. I know it will be for as long as God allows. But it is becoming more and more obvious by their actions toward us that they don't like you speaking "with authority."

L.W. (Harrison, AR)

--Ray Wright, Publishing Services

FROM MAIL PROCESSING

Truth About Easter Intrigues Many

Many viewers were captivated by Mr. Armstrong's two telecasts on Easter, aired March 26-27 and April 2-3. They were not only inspired by the message, but also amazed at the facts about the resurrection. Some said

they have often wondered how three days and three nights fit into the picture and now finally have the answers. Following is a sampling of the comments received.

I saw the Easter program as I was starting to leave for Easter services. I got my Bible out and wrote down the scriptures. I decided, while the program was still on, that I'm not going to keep Easter anymore and I'm going to quit my church. I really believe Mr. Armstrong's message.

H.J. (Minnesota)

We have been discussing the subject of Christ's resurrection for a few years now and I've never been able to fit three days and three nights in between Friday and Sunday! Now I understand that the crucifixion was on a Wednesday. I hope the booklet arrives soon, because I want to know all the scriptures so that I can make some corrections in my life!

H.L. (Illinois)

Mr. Armstrong was shocked when he found out 55 years ago, and I was shocked when I heard today, that the resurrection was not on a Sunday.

R.A. (California)

I find Mr. Armstrong believable and refreshing. He cuts right through all the untruths. I was raised a Catholic and appreciate the straightforward approach and the clear presentation. He's ahead of all the established religions.

R.W. (California)

Everyone celebrates Easter through tradition. And now I understand that the resurrection was not even on a Sunday. I have never heard anything like it before and I would like to know more.

M.S. (New York)

We were discussing Easter eggs, etc., last night when going to "Good Friday" services. My daughter asked, "How in the world do we connect colored eggs with the resurrection of Jesus?" I told her that I had heard it was a pagan ritual. Mr. Armstrong gave me evidence today. It is hard to change things you've done all your life, but I'll change as I come to understand. I would like your booklets so I can better explain it to my children.

D.K. (West Virginia)

I have never watched Mr. Armstrong and did not watch the telecast today. My sister phoned me from Chicago to tell me about the booklet! I grew up knowing that the resurrection was not on Sunday and that Easter and Xmas are false, because my mother was a minister. But, I've never been able to prove it from the Bible and I want to be able to teach it to my children.

S.H. (Illinois)

Finally someone figured it out--three days and three nights! I have asked other ministers and no one has ever been able to explain it before. I wrote down all the scriptures that Mr. Armstrong quoted and I looked them up. But I would like to have it

all in print. Mr. Armstrong has a tremendous knowledge of the Bible, and of the meaning of words. It seems that other Christian religions combine pagan ideas with Christianity!

F.D. (New Jersey)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

THE GREENING OF THE BUNDESTAG; STRAUSS MAKES HIS MARK; THE KREMLIN AND THE POPE

Petra Kelly, West Germany's most visible "Green," walked to the first session of the new Bundestag carrying a bouquet. Another Green Party representative wore green-and-black striped pants. Shunning the Mercedes limousines or luxury buses that transported CDU/CSU, FSP and SPD delegates to the parliament building, the 17 Green deputies marched from downtown Bonn rolling a huge globe representing "Mother Earth" and carrying dead fir-tree branches labelled "victims of acid rain."

However impressive the splash they think they made, the blue-jeaned Greens quickly found out how important they were in the parliamentary scheme of things. The April 11 NEWSWEEK put it this way:

The newcomers...soon discovered the limits of flower power.... Bundestag conservatives saw to it that the vehemently antinuclear Greens were barred from parliamentary committees dealing with national security. Bundestag leaders also maneuvered the Greens out of any of the chamber's four vice speaker positions, thus preventing a Green from ever wielding the gavel during Bundestag debates.

They savored at least one victory. Learning that they were to be seated on the extreme left of the Bundestag, the Greens insisted that they be placed [near the center] between the Social Democrats (SPD) and the CDU. That way, the Greens knew, they would be in full view of television cameras--and within better heckling range of the podium....

The Greens also vowed that they would continue their all-out opposition to any further "nuclearization" of West Germany--either in arms or in energy. That pledge is sure to plunge the Bundestag into sharp conflict before long.

Strauss Forces Policy Changes

Perhaps of far more significance than the parliamentary debut of the Greens is the growing political leverage exerted--behind the scenes--by Franz Josef Strauss. The Bavarian strong man is pulling the ruling coalition further to the right and into a more realistic posture with regards to the Soviet Union and toward communist inroads in areas around the world vital to Western interests. The same issue (April 11) of NEWSWEEK ran an article entitled, "Does Strauss Have Veto Power?" which said, in part:

Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced his cabinet lineup last week, and, as expected, Franz Josef Strauss didn't make the team. But

the apparent snub hardly seemed to disappoint the beefy leader of the Bavarian Christian Social Union. Strauss had lobbied to become foreign minister as a payoff for delivering crucial votes in Kohl's election victory a month ago. In a series of well-publicized leaks and splashy interviews, Strauss boasted that he had actually received an even sweeter reward. The chancellor, he claimed, had granted him a major behind-the-scenes role in the coalition, including a virtual right of veto over any foreign-policy decisions.

The arrangement is certain to mean a sharp swing to the right in West Germany's foreign policy. Strauss recently laid out his views in a 27-page paper submitted to Kohl.... Strauss called specifically for a tougher line against the East bloc, and advocated closer ties with Peking as a means of nettling the Kremlin. He also favored a firmer anticommunist line in Latin America and Africa.

There were indications last week that his influence was already being felt. Strauss aides claimed that Bonn would soon drop its longstanding support for leftist [i.e. SWAPO] guerrillas fighting in Namibia and normalize relations with the South African-backed government by reopening a consulate in the capital city of Windhoek. More such initiatives are likely to follow. In the meantime, Strauss was clearly savoring his new role. Returning to his home base in Munich, he was gleefully telling friends, "I don't care which chancellor serves under me."

Strauss is alleged to have made that last statement several times in the past. Shortly before Chancellor Kohl decided on who was to be in and out of his cabinet, the March 18 TIMES of London editorialized about Herr Strauss's influence, whether exerted in Bonn or in Munich:

Above all the world can expect a shift to the right in the tone, at least, of West German foreign policy. Herr Strauss has a passionate interest in foreign affairs.... Changes are in the air, for instance a lessening of sympathy for SWAPO in Namibia where West Germany is a member of the five-country contact group trying to bring about independence. This would reflect Herr Strauss's view of Africa in terms of an East-West struggle and South Africa as a bulwark against Soviet influence on the continent.

There are already indications of a tougher stance towards East Germany and Herr Strauss will doubtless push for a harsher tone towards all the communist world, although he is too much of a realist to seek to undo the achievements of a decade of Ostpolitik. Such developments would doubtless be welcome in Washington and improve relations with the Reagan Administration.

Herr Strauss has to decide whether to accept Herr Kohl's offer of a post in Bonn or remain Prime Minister of Bavaria. His outstanding talents would be an asset to the government, his independent mind and explosive temperament would create problems, although it is debatable whether he would make life more difficult for the Chancellor from inside the Cabinet or

hurling periodic thunderbolts from Munich. Psychologically, Herr Kohl has acquired a huge advantage over Herr Strauss by winning the election so well four years after the latter failed so badly. But the advantage is only relative, given Herr Strauss's outside, irrepressible personality, his command over a sizable chunk of the coalition and his unswerving conviction that he knows best.

Plot Against the Pope Thickens

Authorities in France have information that supports testimony given to Italian authorities by a Turkish assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, that when he tried to kill Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981, he was acting at the behest of Bulgarian intelligence agents.

The evidence, though not conclusive, includes information from a Bulgarian official who defected in France in July 1981. If true, it reveals how incredibly paranoid the Soviets have been about the impact of John Paul II upon their satellite empire--even to the point of believing that he was an agent of the U.S. government--Zbigniew Brzezinski, in particular--in an attempt to subvert Poland. Reports the NEW YORK TIMES of March 23, 1983:

The official, Ordan Mantarov, 48 years old, told French intelligence agents that the plot to kill the Pope was devised by the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence agency, and by the Bulgarian secret service, which many Western intelligence specialists consider subservient to Moscow. The plan was drawn up, Mr. Mantarov said, because the two agencies believed that the Pope was the keystone of a United States effort to subvert the Polish Government and move it away from the Communist bloc....

Mr. Mantarov, the Bulgarian who defected in France,...[said that Dimiter Savov, a top Bulgarian counterintelligence official] told him that in 1979 the K.G.B. concluded that the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope the year before was engineered by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, who was born in Poland.... The response to the election of Pope John Paul II--made by the Soviet authorities and conveyed to the Bulgarians, according to Mr. Mantarov's account--was to "eliminate" the Pope, and the assignment was given to the Bulgarian security agency....

According to the French sources, Mr. Mantarov said...that when unrest mounted in Poland and the Pope supported the aspirations of Polish workers to organize into independent unions, Eastern European intelligence agencies became concerned that their fears were correct and the K.G.B. began discussions with the Bulgarian intelligence service on a way to eliminate John Paul II.

But why the apparent Soviet phobia with John Paul II? Simply put, the Pope's growing influence in the East--much of it unreported in the general press--extends far beyond Poland and even Eastern Europe, right into the Soviet Union itself. Here are excerpts from the article "The Battle Between the Kremlin and the Pope" which appeared in the March 30, 1983 WALL STREET JOURNAL. The author is Alex Alexiev, a Soviet/East European affairs analyst with the Rand Corporation.

The growing implications of Soviet involvement in the attempt to kill the pope should lead us to question what might have motivated such a "crime of the century."...

From the day of the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II it was clear to Moscow that it had to deal with a formidable opponent.... This was most dramatically demonstrated during his triumphant visit to Poland in June of 1979, which Moscow now believes gave rise to Solidarity. Speaking before collective Polish audiences numbering some six million, the pope...asserted that "no country should ever develop at the cost of another, at the cost of enslavement...conquest, outrage, exploitation and death." The pontiff's remarks in front of millions of people represented an unprecedented challenge to the legitimacy of the communist system and Soviet interests in Eastern Europe.

While the pope's influence on the events in Poland following his visit and until the imposition of martial law is fairly well documented, his revitalizing effect on the church in other Eastern European countries is less well known. In Czechoslovakia, for example, the Catholic Church is experiencing a remarkable revival which has included widespread underground religious life with tens of thousands of participants and a clandestine press.

In Lithuania, a homogeneously Catholic nation with a long record of historical and cultural ties with Poland, the election of Wojtyla was greeted with elation. The church there has been experiencing a dramatic revival since the early 1970's, and has emerged as the most militant church in the Soviet Union.... Open defiance of the regime through unauthorized religious processions, demonstrations and mass petitions of all kinds has become commonplace. The pope has firmly, if quietly, supported the Lithuanians' struggle. He has, for example, refused to appoint regime-approved church officials, considered collaborators by most believers.

No less troublesome for the Kremlin has been John Paul II's perceived impact on the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite. The Uniate Church, as it is also known, has for centuries commanded the allegiance of the people in the Western Ukraine, which was incorporated into the Soviet Union following the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939. As a result, it became an obvious target of the Soviet drive to extirpate Ukrainian nationalism and was the only church in the Soviet Union to be outlawed outright. Ever since that time, the Ukrainian Catholics have been persecuted and victimized like no other religious community in the Soviet Union.... In the spring of 1980, the pontiff convoked the first synod of Uniate bishops, which openly called for the restoration of the church.... Despite particularly brutal KGB suppression, an underground church with as many as 500 priests and 3 bishops is reported to be flourishing in the Ukraine. In February 1983 John Paul II convened another synod of the Uniate bishops and urged them to intensify their efforts in connection with the thousandth anniversary of Christianity in the Ukraine in 1988.

While the pope's influence has undoubtedly been strongest among the Catholics in the Soviet bloc it has had much broader ramifications. By emphasizing Europe's common Christian roots, he has consistently stressed its spiritual unity--East and West--and has gone beyond that to argue for the opening not only of borders, but also of (political) "systems." In a highly significant gesture, the pope has declared the Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who were instrumental in the spread of Christianity among the ancestors of many present-day Catholic and Orthodox Slavs, copatron saints of Europe along with St. Benedict, thus symbolically overcoming the centuries-old East-West division of Europe. [See page 11 of the December 27, 1982 PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT.]

It should come as no surprise then that the Kremlin's attitudes toward the pope some four years after his election and close to two years after the attempt on his life continue to be unremittingly hostile and increasingly confrontational. For Moscow, John Paul II was and continues to be much more than a narrow Polish problem. The pope on his part realizes clearly what a serious challenge he presents for the Kremlin. As early as 1979 during his visit to Poland he told an audience: "I'm sure there are people out there who are already having a hard time taking this Slavic pope." Hard enough, it seems, to prompt an exasperated Kremlin to cry out, as Henry II once did regarding the Archbishop of Canterbury: "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?"

Only two months from now, in June, the Pope pays a return visit to his Polish homeland. Will we hear yet more dramatic calls for the "spiritual union" of Eastern and Western Europe?

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau