

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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NEW DOOR OPENS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dateline: Manila

Stanley R. Rader was received by President Marcos of the Philippines Saturday, March 22. Mr. Rader was invited by the President to attend, as the special guest, the 83rd Annual Army Day Celebration at the Bonifacio Army Base at Manila.

He was introduced by the President to the Minister of Defense, the Deputy Minister of Defense, the Minister of Information, the Deputy Foreign Minister, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and the Commander of the Army. All of this was recorded on television and seen by the people of the Philippines.

After the 2 1/2-hour ceremony and parade had ended, the President and First Lady personally invited Mr. Rader to accompany them to the Officer's Club to share a buffet luncheon and to continue their conversation. Upon Mr. Rader's arrival there, he was engaged in conversation with the President for more than a quarter of an hour while all the eyes of some 300 guests (including all other ministers of the government, the entire diplomatic core and other leading members of the government and society of the Philippines) were watching the President and Mr. Rader. The guests had formed a large circle around the two of them at a little distance in what could be described as a large ballroom. Still photographs recorded the entire event.

Mr. Rader discussed plans for covering the President and the New Society in the Plain Truth and Quest, and our new cooperative effort with the Philippine people and the government of the Philippines through their Minister of Labor and its Manpower Institute. Also discussed were our hopes to engage in, and assist with, the Philippines' very impressive Performing Arts Center--spearheaded by the First Lady of the land, Mrs. Imelda Marcos--with our own world famous Performing Arts program in Pasadena. Mr. Rader promised the President to return to the Philippines this Tuesday (March 25) to continue their discussion and to make plans for the future.

Thus another door has been opened for the Church!

Mr. Rader appeared on local television as a guest Friday morning and every television station covered the interview on their evening news programs at 7 and again at 11 on Friday, March 21. The Bulletin, the leading newspaper, ran a feature story of Mr. Rader's visit on behalf of the Church, Mr. Armstrong and the Foundation (See below).

Later next week Mr. Rader will visit Singapore and Thailand on behalf of Mr. Armstrong.

(Editor's Note: The headline and article on the following page reporting on Mr. Rader's visit to Manila appeared in Manila's Bulletin Today, March 22nd. A picture of Mr. Rader accompanied the article.)

American Agency To Aid Labor Here

Stanley Rader, acting Chairman of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation of Pasadena, California, arrived yesterday from Tokyo.

He met with Labor Minister Blas Ople to discuss the Foundation's contribution during the decade to the Ministry of Labor in manpower and development projects.

Rader was accompanied by Osamu Gotoh who directs the Foundation's activities in Japan.

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation is an organization dedicated to aiding developing countries in the areas of cultural, economic, and religious developments.

Rader disclosed that the Ambassador Foundation has agreed to fund the Ministry of Labor to the extent of \$25,000 per year for the next ten years.

He said the Foundation's parent organization, the Worldwide Church of God, will devote much of its spiritual, human, physical, and financial resources in furthering the goals and aspirations of the Filipino people and the government of the Philippines [so] that they strive together to bring to fruition all the objectives of the new society.

Rader is leaving today for Peking where he will be a guest of the People's Republic of China and lecture at the University of Peking and Futean University in Shanghai.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICESFestival Allotment and Transfers

By the time you receive this, you should have received (or will very shortly receive) your spring festival allotment checks. I wanted to take the opportunity to let you know that this year the annual allotment amounts are nine per cent of each minister's annual salary. Of this amount, fifteen per cent is being sent for the spring feasts and the remaining eighty-five per cent will be sent about a month before the Feast of Tabernacles.

The total annual amount will be considered part of your salary and you won't be expected to return any of it. In effect, you are receiving a pay increase. The Accounting Department will be providing information about the tax liabilities that you may incur.

In connection with the Feast, I need to mention that we are entertaining thoughts about transfers for the ministers. As you know, transfers have been discouraged for the past couple of years. This year, because of increasing the number of feast sites, we will need to bolster the number of ministers attending some of the sites. We still expect you to attend with your local congregations, but know that if we don't get enough requests for some of the sites, we'll have to require a few transfers.

In order to help the Festival Coordinators plan for the Feast, we must receive all requests for transfers of ministers in the employ of the Work by Friday, April 11. If you want to transfer, be sure that Dr. Kessler receives your request by then. To help you decide what you might do as well as keep you informed, a map showing which churches are assigned to which sites and a list of the sites and their coordinators is included in this issue. We will then go over the requests and balance the workload the following week and let you know the decision by the end of April.

I should mention at this point that this is a transition year for feast planning in more ways than one. As a result, the Festival Coordinators for each site will need your cooperation and assistance in every way to make this a successful Feast. Because of doubling the number of sites, there are going to be a lot more opportunities for everyone. There will be more speaking assignments as well as the duties of the various departments--annointing, traffic control, information, etc.

<u>Festival Site</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>	<u>Festival Site</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>
Big Sandy, TX	Don Ward	Lake Ozarks, MO	Jim Kisse
Biloxi, MS	Bob Peoples	Norfolk, VA	Ken Giese
Corpus Christi, TX	Dennis Van Deventer	Orlando, FL	Bob Bertuzzi
Dayton, OH	Dick Thompson	Pasadena, CA	Larry Salyer
Detroit, MI	Bruce Vance	Rapid City, S.D.	Steve Buchanan
Eugene, OR	Larry Walker	Savannah, GA	Mike Hechel
Fresno, CA	Don Billingsley	Spokane, WA	Roger Foster
Glens Falls, N.Y.	Lyle Welty	St. Petersburg, FL	Bob Jones
Johnson City, TX	Charles Groce	Tucson, AZ	Larry Neff
Kauai, HI	Dave Fraser	Vail, CO	Ron Kelly
		Wisconsin Dells, WI	Carl McNair

Spanish Department Update

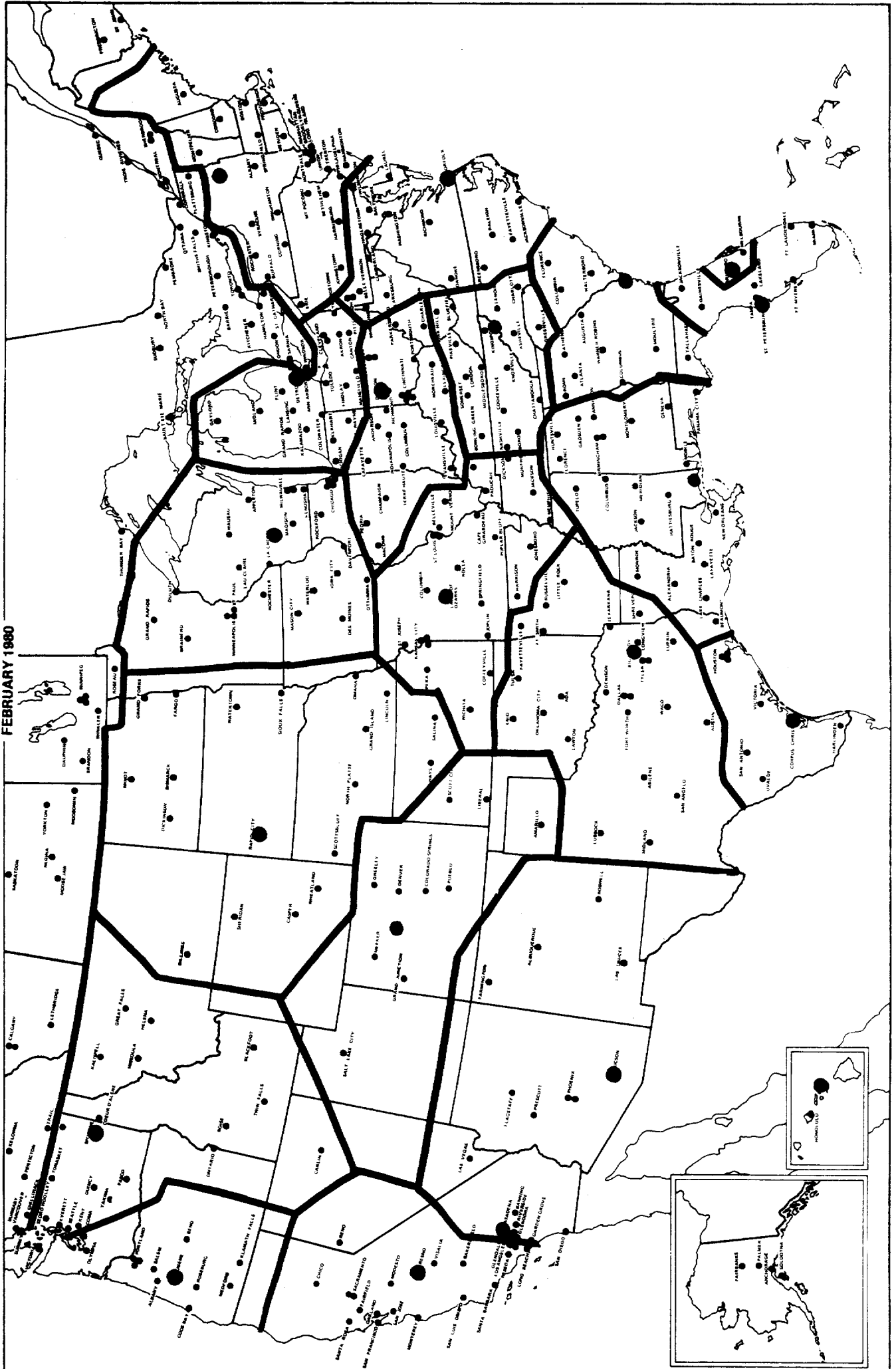
Recently Leon Walker, Director of the Work's Spanish Department in Pasadena, had the opportunity of presenting an end-of-year report to Mr. Armstrong in his home in Tucson. Mr. Armstrong was very enthusiastic about the report and asked that it be written up for the Pastor General's Report.

Income and Mail: The income for 1979 from Mexico, Central and South America was most encouraging--up 41% over 1978. Mail, while not showing as dramatic an increase, amounted to a respectable eight percent increase over the previous year.

Current Circulation: There are at this time 72,000 subscribers to the Spanish PLAIN TRUTH and 62,000 newsstand copies are distributed (95% to the U.S. and Puerto Rico). Almost 1800 copies of the Spanish GOOD NEWS are sent to members and co-workers. Over 6,000 people are currently enrolled in the Spanish CORRESPONDENCE COURSE.

Churches: At the present time there are nine Spanish-speaking churches holding weekly Sabbath services: Pasadena, California (attendance 114); San Juan, Puerto Rico (70); Mexico City (108); Guadalajara, Mexico (87); San Salvador, El Salvador (82); Bogota, Colombia (78); Lima, Peru (51); Santiago, Chile (68) and Bahia Blanca, Argentina (51).

FEBRUARY 1980



U.S. FEAST SITES

Bible Studies: There are 29 outlying Bible studies held as follows: nine in Mexico, three in Guatemala, three in El Salvador, one in Costa Rica, one in Panama, two in Colombia, two in Venezuela, two in Peru, two in Chile, one in Uruguay, two in Argentina and one in Portugal.

Some of these Bible studies are quite small and some are held infrequently. Sermon tapes are sent to most areas weekly to supplement the "live" Bible studies conducted by the ministry.

Members: There are at present 710 members in Mexico, Central and South America and there were 105 baptisms in 1979, representing a net growth of 17% over 1978. There are also approximately 200 members in the U.S. who are served by the Spanish Department.

Plans for 1980: While 1979 was a most productive year, 1980 already appears to be more promising. Our newspaper insert promotion (as reported in previous issues of the Pastor General's Report) has exceeded our most optimistic expectations. With 95% of the responses tabulated we have recorded a 3.1% response (one percent is considered very good by the advertising industry) at the cost of only \$1.36 per response. This promotion has been so successful that we are looking into the possibility of placing inserts in many newspapers, not only in the United States but also in the major cities throughout Latin America.

Income for January, 1980, is almost unbelievable when compared to that of January, 1979. Here are figures for some of the countries where we have received reports thus far as compared to January, 1979: Argentina, 25% increase; Colombia, 54%; El Salvador, 1268%; Mexico 133%; and Peru, 371% increase.

More is also being planned in terms of broadcasts, literature, Bible studies, etc. We will keep all informed of developments as they occur.

News of the Work in Germany

This encouraging report comes from our office in Bonn:

Campaigns: Several ministers assigned to the German-language area met in Bonn in February to discuss future campaigns for the readers of KLAR & WAHR (German PLAIN TRUTH). During the meeting, chaired by Mr. Schnee, it was decided to hold campaigns (known as Lecture Series) in all fifteen church areas we have presently in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. These campaigns are scheduled to be held from January to April 1981. Postponing them until that time will enable us to offer the lectures to the the 35,000 new subscribers we hope to add to our KLAR & WAHR list this year.

One method we hope to use in order to add these new subscribers is distribution by the membership of a flyer advertising KLAR & WAHR. Fifty to one hundred thousand flyers will be made available by the Bonn office to each church area. Members will then be responsible for organizing and financing their own distribution effort. Forums will soon be held in the church areas to discuss the best means of distribution (for example, insertion into daily newspapers).

In February three follow-up lectures to the mid-January KLAR & WAHR lecture series in Berlin were held at one-week intervals on weekday

evenings. Despite a time gap of three weeks between the last January lecture and the first one in February (this due to hall unavailability in the Berliner "KongreBhalle"), 36 readers attended on February 7th. Eight days later 23 attended to hear a lecture on the Holy Days, and on February 21st twenty-nine readers heard "What is a True Christain?"

Two new people have already attended the mid-February regular Bible study in Berlin, and several more expressed interest in services at the close of the lecture series. Speaker Victor Root, minister for Berlin, stated that the visitors to the lecture series had not been invited "en masse" to services, but had been informed that services were available to those truly interested in following Jesus Christ and supporting this Work.

At the end of February Mr. Frank Schnee travelled to Poland to visit Mr. Victor Przybilla and his family. Mr. Przybilla is our only member in Poland and Mr. Schnee had up until now never had the opportunity of visiting him.

Advertising: In February we had placed three ads in two Berlin newspapers ("Berliner Morgenpost" and "Tagesspiegel"), following up the 13-minute long report about Ambassador College and Herbert W. Armstrong on the Berlin radio station RIAs. To date we have received 1400 new subscribers and have increased the subscription list in Berlin by 70%. The ads have also achieved the desired DM 10 cost response mark. It was an encouraging preview for the up-coming, nationwide ad campaign getting underway this spring.

In the February KLAR & WAHR, we had advertised four booklets on a full-page ad. The response was again extremely good, although the booklets have been advertised many times before. We attribute the good results to the monthly booklet cards we are again inserting in the magazine each month. It once again reveals the need to make booklet ordering as easy as possible.

In March the mail income for the month to date was 9.2% over last year. Our year-to-date total is now 15.3% more than last year.

Continued Progress In Australia

Our office in Burleigh Heads sent the following progress report:

We are continuing to receive an excellent mail response. The volume of mail being received each month is almost three times that of 1976 (15,000 letters were received in February).

The fine increase in mail income (+30.6% year to date) is generating a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm. There is no doubt God is providing the wherewithal to make 1980 a most effective year.

PLAIN TRUTH magazine: Through the continuing distribution of householder cards, and insert sheets in selected newspapers, The PLAIN TRUTH mailing list continues to rise. We have now passed the 87,000 mark--the highest ever on record.

Church: Church attendance continues to climb. It is a pleasure to report that Church attendance (5066) for February broke all previous records.

Campaigns: Campaigns by our local ministers in many areas throughout Australia got under way this month. Twenty lectures have been conducted so far, ten more are already finalized, and an increasing number are now in the planning stage.

While some larger campaigns are being planned for the major cities where there is a fairly large PLAIN TRUTH readership, many of the lectures are being conducted in local halls where The PLAIN TRUTH readership, although not large, are nevertheless within easy driving distance. And what is perhaps the most exciting and encouraging news is that these campaigns are producing results. Many new people are attending and showing a definite interest in the Church and what we teach.

Bible Prophecy has been the keynote of many of the lectures and it may be that world events are forcing people to consider the direction in which their lives are going and to do something about it. Follow-up Bible studies are being conducted to maintain their interest.

Comments From Pastor's Reports

CHICAGO WEST--ROY HOLLADAY: There is hardly a day that goes by that I do not receive a call from a new person. They are not always wanting a visit, but just call to ask questions. But it does indicate much renewed activity in this area.

SCOTTSBLUFF, NE--CHUCK ZIMMERMAN: The spiritual and physical vigor of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong on Romans tapes is proof of answered prayer to many out here.

ALBUQUERQUE, NM--WALTER DICKINSON: Members responding to basic doctrinal messages. Questions being answered, members returning to services. New PMs attending services.

FARMINGTON, NM--WALTER DICKINSON: People attending services are growing spiritually. Three families have returned after a visit session.

GLENDORA, CA--CARN CATHERWOOD: The Church is still going through a good period of growth, both in numbers and spiritually. There have been major trials for some (deaths in the family, accidents, etc.), but the congregation is being strengthened by it all and attitudes seem to be "up." God is clearly working with the Church and the Work in a very positive way and the local congregation reflects this.

MIDLAND, TX--KEITH WALDEN: People watching world events--following very closely. Behind Mr. Armstrong in prayers 100%.

HOBBS, NM--KEITH WALDEN: Very loyal group--100% behind Mr. Armstrong.

OLYMPIA, WA--LAMBERT GREER: The brethren are solidly behind the Work. There is always a special interest in the activities and projects Mr. Armstrong leads us in. The China trip was very interesting to the brethren.

APPLETON, WI--DAVE FIEDLER: Attendance is way up. Broke the record each week for the last three weeks. Considering attendance is usually down in the middle of winter and this is flu season, this is significant! Had seven baptisms last Sabbath!

I have the opportunity to do six 12-minute talks on a radio station in the central part of this area for free. Will deal with Kingdom, Why were you born, marriage, etc.: a new experience for me and the brethren are looking forward to it, too.

KALISPELL, MT--BILL QUILLEN: Some PM activity in the area. A few people moving into the area. Average attendance for the month up some 20 over last year.

SIOUX FALLS, SD--GEORGE AFFELDT: The people seem to enjoy Mr. Armstrong's tapes on the book of Romans. The Church here is very much behind him and encouraged with the success of his China trip.

TEXARKANA, TX--LYNN TORRANCE: Beautiful, warm, sunny Sabbaths for January in Texarkana; attendance held up. New people showing up all the time. People like to hear positive, encouraging things about the Work. Pastor General's Reports encourage and uplift. Tapes from Mr. Armstrong help hold the confidence and loyalty of Church members.

In the past year the attendance of children has increased from around 25 up to 40 to 65. Interested children and young people seem to be encouraging attendance of parents who might not otherwise attend.

MONROE, LA--BRISCOE ELLETT II: God seems to be finding out more and more whose hearts are loyal to Him and making a separation. Those whose attitudes just aren't right are steadily being weeded out. And quite frankly it is a blessing to see that type of attitude go. It is so refreshing to see the change of spirit now being actively brought back into God's Church.

RAPID CITY, SD--STEVE BUCHANAN: The majority of the Church is solidly behind the Work of God and are supportive of God's Apostle. Many have commented that Mr. Armstrong's Bible studies on the book of Romans were especially helpful to them. All seem to be excited about Mr. Armstrong's upcoming trips. I feel the brethren are developing a needed sense of urgency about world conditions.

AUSTIN, TX--HAROLD RHODES: Enthusiasm is still running high concerning Mr. Armstrong's trips abroad (especially China). Increase in average monthly Church attendance and Bible study attendance; increased interest in prophecy!

LITTLE ROCK, AR--FRED KELLERS: All is well. People appreciate getting Mr. Armstrong's tapes. I know I do! Please keep them coming.

ONTARIO, OR--JEFF MCGOWAN: All appear to be doing very well in the area. The loyalty to the Work appears to be very good.

MANHATTAN, KS--JAMES WELLS: Overall, the brethren here were very inspired and encouraged by Mr. Armstrong's China trip and tapes of it. Everything is going well here at present.

ST. JOSEPH, MO--JAMES WELLS: Brethren in St. Joseph were very excited over Mr. Armstrong's China trip tapes, and also the Bible studies in Romans. Seven baptisms in the past two months have also lifted their spirits.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

CHURCH RECORDS LAW MOVING TOWARD REPEAL

As reported last week, a bill was introduced that would repeal the California Attorney General's power to inspect church records (granted by a new law made effective January 1, 1980). But first it must be considered by a couple of committees. This week it was approved by the state's powerful Senate Judiciary Committee with a unanimous 8-0 vote!

Representatives of God's Church attended the meeting in the state capital. Mr. Dean Kelly, the National Council of Churches' expert on church/state matters came from the East Coast to testify at the hearing. This bill is generating a great deal of interest because a broad spectrum of church leaders realize that the law in the California Corporations Code giving the Attorney General supervisory powers over churches infringes on freedom of religion.

The Attorney General's highhanded methods in his suit against the World-wide Church of God appeared to be the primary catalyst that brought about the bill to repeal the law. Other religious groups want to make sure that they are never treated in the same manner. So, amid an avalanche of mail and other backing, the Attorney General stood alone in opposing the bill. Therefore at the committee meeting he quietly dropped his opposition--for the time being.

EVEREST HOUSE DOING WELL

Everest House, the book publishing area of the Work, has been doing very well. Here is a random selection of news about various titles that have been published.

Firstly, Mr. Herbert Armstrong's book, TOMORROW--What It Will Be Like, was selected for a recommended Spring, 1980 list of new religious titles by a reviewer in the prestigious trade magazine, Publisher's Weekly. This, of course, gives us tremendous free publicity and greatly adds to the credibility of the book by association with the established book trade.

Because Mr. Armstrong's books are being published commercially, his writings are being taken much more seriously now by the book-buying public.

Another Everest House title, the very moving true story To Elvis With Love (Don't be put off by the title), is scheduled to be released by Columbia pictures as a new film in April of this year. We sold the film rights last year.

It looks like we have a national seller with the book They Call Me Assassin by Jack Tatum and Bill Kushner. According to one reviewer, it may well be the most interesting professional sports book ever written. The book is in its sixth printing.

For the future, we are anticipating the publication of Mr. Armstrong's new book, A Voice Cries Out.

--Publishing Services

LITERATURE CATALOG CONTINUES TO GENERATE GOOD RESPONSE

The "Literature Catalog" (a small colorful brochure offering 19 booklets and articles to new subscribers) has been in existence now for about three

and a half years--and it still continues to bring a good response from new people on our mailing list.

Since October 1976 we have tested five different versions of the catalog and sent them to 1.3 million people. During this time these people have averaged an overall 15% response. 201,000 of them have requested 1,099,411 pieces of literature (an average of five lit requests per person). In addition to requesting literature, nearly 1,000 people contributed \$106,000 of their own volition!

The leading booklet in the Literature Catalog continues to be "Are We Living In The Last Days?" Nearly half of all the people who request material from the catalog ask for this booklet. This indicates that the Work's audience is interested in prophecy, the turmoil in world events, and that they are interested in finding out what the Bible has to say about the times we live in. The booklets and articles published by the Work are helping them find the true answers.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

MAIL COMMENTS

The mail comments this week feature letters about Mr. Rader's activities, Mr. Armstrong's planned trip to Russia and his Bible Study tapes on Romans.

--Mail Processing Center

Members Express Appreciation for Mr. Rader

I wanted to write a few lines to tell you that I feel that you are a tremendous blessing to God's Work. I thank God that He has given His Apostle a faithful and loyal man to help him do the Work of God. It is quite obvious that over the past years God has been readying you to be the great help that you are to Mr. Armstrong. I truly thank you for the way in which you help him.

--Limmian J. Leyda (Medina, OH)

The brethren of the New York-New Jersey metropolitan areas are grateful for Mr. Stanley Rader's visit to our area. Please thank him for us. We are happy that God has had him ordained Evangelist and pray that God will give him the added amount of His Holy Spirit to carry out his dual responsibilities.

--Benjamin Hodges (Brooklyn, NY)

Yesterday in Pittsburgh we had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Mr. Stanley Rader speak. It was our first time hearing him speak when he was not accompanying you. We really enjoyed his informative and factual message. It makes us feel good to know that such a person is always ready and willing to serve with you, Mr. Armstrong.

--Mr. & Mrs. Michael Worch (Carmichaels, PA)

Mr. Stanley Rader spoke to us last Sabbath at Pittsburgh. We were very glad to hear his firsthand report of how the legal proceedings are going. We also enjoyed the documentary film. It is so easy to forget what a terrible thing that the State of California is doing.

--James Scutelis (Pittsburgh, PA)

We were truly blessed this past Sabbath as we were able to view the film CHURCH vs STATE, and also were able to hear Mr. Rader before he went to Moscow. The film was very good and Mr. Rader was really inspired. He is really growing stronger and is truly dedicated to you [Mr. Armstrong], to God and His Word.

--Joseph C. Russell (Rochester, PA)

Expectation Building Over Trip to Russia

If it is God Almighty's will that you should go to Russia, as a witness for Him, He will make it possible as He did with China. He opened the Bamboo Curtain to you there, and he can open up the Iron Curtain in Russia.

--Paula De Voy (Ventura, CA)

I will be praying for your visit to Moscow. I am sure God is with you in all your visits. I would like to feel like I have a wonderful part by praying for the Work.

--Mrs. Harry Mallott (Cincinnati, OH)

We are all very encouraged to read of your determination to go to Moscow. That cannot help but be a momentous trip. Our prayers are with you to the successful completion of your calling.

--Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Orr (Cincinnati, OH)

My wife and I pray that you will be permitted by God to announce the coming of the Kingdom of God to the Russian people this spring. With God's blessing, no man will prevent you.

--Mr. & Mrs. John Ernst (Boonville, MO)

Romans Bible Studies Appreciated

Just a quick note to let you know that my wife and I really enjoyed your Bible study tapes on Romans. You add so much more meaning to the letters that Paul wrote by describing the historical reasons why these letters were written. It helps to understand what was going on during those time periods. We hope to hear more Bible study tapes from you. It's a great privilege to be instructed by God's Apostle.

--Mr. & Mrs. George Stephani (Yaphank, NY)

I would like to tell you how much I enjoy and really appreciate the tapes of your sermons on the book of Romans. It's almost just like you are here. Thank you so much for all your efforts in making it possible for us to hear them.

--Mrs. W. J. Melton (West Asheville, NC)

My wife and I have been hearing the tapes of your Bible study on Romans. We came home from services today just amazed at the strength of your speaking and the quickness of your mind--it is as though you are gaining in impact by the month! We thank you for continually inspiring and leading and teaching us, and we thank God for using you to get the Church going again. We have sat and read other letters

sent to you (from other people) in the past, but today we had to write ourselves, you were so inspiring.

--Mark & Thea Graham (Elyria, OH)

I am so glad that we are getting some sermons on tape by Mr. Armstrong. They are important in my life and I certainly hope we continue getting these.

--L. C. Wood (Millbrook, AL)

ON THE WORLD SCENE

UNITY THEME MARKS CEREMONY FOR NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY; POPE JOHN PAUL II EXTOLS IDEAL OF A UNIFIED EUROPE: In a ceremony signifying Christian unity, Robert Alexander Kenney Runcie was enthroned on March 26 as the 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury. He becomes spiritual leader of 65 million Anglicans around the world, including three million U.S. Episcopalians.

For the first time, a Roman Catholic clergyman took part in the ceremony, signifying the dialogue between the two churches for possible union. A personal representative of Pope John Paul II also attended the ceremony along with other worldwide Christian church leaders, among them a host of Orthodox Christians. Pope John Paul sent Cardinal Johannes Willebrands of the Netherlands to the enthronement as his personal delegate.

The Vatican was represented at the 1975 enthronement of Runcie's retired predecessor, Donald Coggan, but Tuesday--for the first time since the European revolt against the Popes of Rome in the 16th-Century Reformation --a Catholic priest took part in the ceremony. Cardinal Basil Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster who leads four million English and Welsh Catholics, read from a passage in the New Testament.

A few days earlier, on March 21, 1980, Pope John Paul II extolled the idea of a unified Europe in a ceremony marking the anniversary of St. Benedict. According to a dispatch from Vatican City via the Religious News Service, "Pope John Paul II held up the efforts of St. Benedict to create a Christian unity in the Old World as a model for a new, unified Europe."

In a message to mark the openings of celebrations for the 1,500th anniversary of the saint's birth, the pontiff said: "I am happy to wish the return and recovery of the moral and spiritual unity, worked on by St. Benedict, in order that a stable and sincere climate of harmony, mutual understanding, of order and therefore of peace be formed among all the people of Europe, as is the ardent desire of all."

The pope's message, which was read by an assistant to the Vatican Secretary of State, was delivered at Montecassino, the famous monastery not far from Naples and site of a bitterly fought World War II battle. The monastery was founded by St. Benedict in the sixth century.

Monasteries based on St. Benedict's rules for monastic life--often summarized as "Ora et Labora" (prayer and work)--spread throughout Europe during the dark ages when the Roman Empire's civil authority had collapsed.

The pontiff noted that "the Benedictine rule peacefully invaded all of Europe...Outside of Italy, in Gaul, England, Belgium, Friesland, all of Germany and Switzerland, Benedictine monasteries soon appeared. Some time passed and then the Iberian Peninsula, Holland, Ireland, Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Hungary, Dalmatia, Albania and, on the flank of Palestine, Syria and Constantinople knew the satisfying and civilizing works of the sons of St. Benedict."

Pope John Paul called "this unity" the "theme and the aim of my message."

Observing that Pope Paul VI had earlier declared St. Benedict the patron saint of Europe, the pontiff said the founder of western monasticism had carried on the work "of the unification of peoples, based on their common Christian faith." He exclaimed that "peoples who for their histories, their traditions, education and characters were so different that they often opposed each other in war, nonetheless, felt themselves all Christian, all believers in God, all for their faith the sons of the same heavenly Father and the Church of Rome."

As he closed his message the pope noted that European culture "was and still is fortunately impregnated by Christianity."

The pontiff also extolled Latin as the language of the old Europe "spoken commonly by the men of culture and used in the liturgy." It was "a chain and expression of this ideal unity," he said. (Three days earlier the pope told bishops to respect the desire of those Roman Catholics who want mass said in Latin. Since Vatican II, the use of vernacular languages has nearly submerged the use of Latin. But the pope said that "the Roman Catholic church has special obligations toward Latin, the splendid language of ancient Rome.")

On a religious note of lighter vein, TIME magazine, in its March 24, 1980 story on Zimbabwe had an interesting observation on the man who might occupy the ceremonial office of president in the new government of Prime Minister-elect Robert Mugabe. It reported that "Mugabe's apparent choice for the presidency is the Rev. Canaan Banana, 44, an eccentric Methodist minister and ZANU militant best known for his adaptation of the Lord's Prayer to the goals of black nationalism: 'Teach us to demand our share of the gold. Forgive us our docility....'"

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau