

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



VOL. 3, NO. 10

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

MARCH 6, 1981

T.V. POWERHOUSES ADDED

by

Herbert W. Armstrong

We are already launching out on the new lunge forward as we come in on the homestretch of God's Work for this END Time.

Last week we were able to obtain time on Chicago's number one TV station, WGN. This week two more major TV stations in major markets have been added: KOA, Denver, and KCMO, Kansas City. Each of these is the number one station in its area.

More than 25 years ago when I was on KCMO TV, fall of 1955, our program had a higher viewing rating than the "TONIGHT" show, now hosted by Johnny Carson--then hosted by Steve Allen, even though the NBC show had an earlier and better time slot than I did.

More stations will continue to be added.

Ministers' Salaries

I am concerned about ministers' salaries. The current budget for this calendar year projects a 5% increase in ministers' salaries--also a possible additional 5% increase, and a possible 10% increase over present projections if it becomes possible.

I very much want to make it still larger if increased income allows. However, to make possible this new drive in the homestretch of the Work, I am having to ask all members to make extra sacrifices, tighten their belts, increase the Work's income to provide the increased expense of more and more TV outlets, larger newsstand circulation of the P.T., and increased purchase of advertising space in mass-circulation magazines and newspapers to get Christ's Gospel Message before additional millions of people. In view of this it may be necessary for you ministers to forego a still larger increase during this year. If so, I do want to make proper increases just as soon as the budget allows.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES1981 Festival Map

Reproduced in this Pastor General's Report is a map showing the festival boundaries for 1981. Hopefully this will clear up any uncertainty you might have had the last few weeks about where your congregation has been assigned.

Two portions of the map will probably be hard to make out: the Los Angeles area and the New York City area. In the L.A. area, the Glendale, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Reseda churches are assigned to Squaw Valley; the others are assigned to Tucson. In the New York City area, all of the churches--Union, Montvale, Manhattan, Long Island and Brooklyn-Queens--are assigned to Mt. Pocono.

Please make sure that the Feast Adviser in your congregation(s) plans to attend where his church is assigned, even if a large proportion of the congregation desires to transfer. If the current Feast Adviser would like to transfer, please appoint a new one and let us know as soon as possible. Send his name, address, telephone number, and computer index number to the Festival Office as soon as possible.

International News

French Department Activities The French Department in Pasadena has now completed going over the 1981 edition of Mr. Armstrong's book, THE MISSING DIMENSION IN SEX. Before printing, every article and booklet must be carefully examined since our printers don't know a word of French. This is a huge task that requires team unity. This edition is now ready for a planned print run of 25,000 copies.

For the last several months, Mr. Armstrong has been writing powerful, hard-hitting ads that have been placed in large-circulation and influential papers such as the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, and especially the Wall Street Journal. Plans now call for translating these very same ads into French and placing them in Francophone newspapers published in Canada!

Mr. Rex Morgan, minister from New Zealand who works in the Auckland office, was here for the Ministerial Refreshing Program. During this time he had the opportunity to talk to Mr. Apartian about plans for a French advertising campaign in the Pacific islands, including Vanuatu (the new name of New Hebrides) and Tahiti.

The total incoming mail for January of this year in Pasadena was 3,054 letters. This is an increase of 115% over last year! Requests for THE MISSING DIMENSION IN SEX continue to come in following Mr. Armstrong's letter offering the book. To date, the number of requests for the new book is over 18,000.

Believe it or not, a 1972 advertisement in Reader's Digest is still bearing fruit! The small cut-out coupon offering the French booklet, THE SEVEN LAWS OF SUCCESS, showed up among our mail at the beginning of February.

A Voice Cries Out: A Staggering Turn in World Events

is due to erupt in the next few years!

(A message worth repeating.)

Appeared in the Wall Street Journal, March 2, 1981

IT WILL INVOLVE violently the United States, Britain, Western Europe, and the Middle East.

It's already rather late for the Free World to come awake to the real meaning behind current world events!

World leaders do not see clearly what is coming. **Why?** Why are the best minds not seeing—leaders in the United States, heads of state around the world—scientists, educators, editors, news analysts—bankers, industrialists, leaders in business and commerce? **Why?**

They are all the product of modern education. They have been falsely educated in a system where the most important dimension in knowledge is unknown and untaught. They have been deceived into closing their minds to the basic **CAUSES** of present events and trends.

The world has been falsely educated to ignore **CAUSES** and deal with **EFFECTS!** There had to be a **CAUSE** of present and coming **EFFECTS!** There is a **CAUSE** that has produced strife, violence and war—poverty, wretchedness, human suffering—crime, widespread immorality, the decadence in the basic foundation of any healthy and stable society, the **FAMILY UNIT!** But the leaders do not know, and certainly do not correct the **CAUSES!**

World Explosion to Erupt!

There has been a fatal missing dimension in the dissemination of knowledge. Leaders do not know *what* man is, or the purpose and meaning of life! They were not taught to distinguish the true values from the false. They did not learn the real **CAUSES** of troubles, nor **THE WAY** to peace, happiness, abundant well-being for all.

They know nothing of the overall **PURPOSE** being worked out here below! Consequently they guide humanity in a course in conflict with that purpose! Lacking knowledge of **THE WAY** to peace, we have no peace. Leaders talk of peace, they profess to work for peace, they fight for peace, while they give approval



HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

and blind acceptance of **THE WAY** that produces **WARS!**

This world is giving civilization's acceptance to **THE WAYS** that are the **CAUSES** of all the world's evils!

And now we are approaching the final grand smash explosion. It will stagger the mind of man beyond the bounds of sanity! Forces are at work today on plans, conspiracies that soon will erupt the world into a violence and chaos such as never occurred before and never shall again! Men now are tampering with forces of nature they lack the prudence, knowledge, ability and wisdom to control!

In this folly of educated ignorance it has become fashionable and intellectually titillating to ignore the basic **Mind and Power** over all—the **PURPOSE** being worked out here below, and the master plan for its working out—the invisible but **Supreme Power** now soon to intervene and end the impending world chaos. It will be done to us, before mankind blasts itself out of existence!

Unreal though it may seem to those steeped in today's educational deceptions, some 2,500 years ago the **Supreme Power** of the universe inspired a man named Isaiah to quote Him, saying, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning . . . saying, 'My counsel shall stand.'"

The great world powers are formulating their plans and policies. But the next few years will see astounding events explode in a manner very different than they plan.

Why? Because there does exist the great God who says: "The Eternal

wrecks the purposes of pagans, he brings to nothing what the nations plan, but the Eternal's **PURPOSE** stands for ever, and what He plans will last from age to age. . . . The Eternal looks from heaven, beholding all mankind; from where He sits, He scans all who inhabit the world; He who alone made their minds, He notes all they do."

Through inspired prophets, this same Eternal foretold, beginning 2,500 years ago, the world events of the future—zeroing in particularly on our time now! All events prophesied to occur up to now have happened!—without a miss! The rest—the climactic crisis of our end time—is certain—and soon!

Yet the world's best minds are in total ignorance of tremendous impending events. Neither religionists nor theologians understand!

Why? Approximately one third of all the world's best seller is filled with **PROPHECIES**—mostly foretelling our immediate future! Yet the **KEY** that unlocks prophecy to **UNDERSTANDING** had been lost! That vital key has been found! But because it is **NOT** the doctrine they have been preaching, evangelical theologians ridicule it.

That vital key is the identity of the United States and Britain in biblical prophecy.

Where is the United States spoken of in biblical prophecies—especially pertaining to our immediate future? Small nations—Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt, Turkey—are mentioned. Russia is mentioned. How could such a great world power as the United States be ignored? It **ISN'T!** What you have read on this page is taken from the introduction of this revealing book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

We will present it gratis to those whose unprejudiced eyes are willing to see. It is an eye-opening, intriguing book—230 pages. You may have an attractive paperbound copy, illustrated in color, gratis on request—with no follow-up. Or, if you prefer, you may buy a distinctive hardcover copy at bookstores.

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God

News From the Caribbean (1980 Summary) Incoming mail for the entire year of 1980 was very encouraging indeed. We received a total of 34,138 pieces of mail, or approximately 71% above the 1979 total. Mail with contributions also showed a tremendous increase--41% over the volume received in 1979.

The income for the Caribbean area registered a healthy increase of 19% over 1979. Operational expenses and inflation have taken a big bite. However, since sufficient reserves are on hand, our finances will not be affected too greatly.

Throughout 1980 requests for the PT, CC and other literature were at an all-time record high! Many of these requests have reached us by people writing directly to our office, a local church area, or to Pasadena. We have also received requests through advertising, our newsstand program, radio and TV. Below are some significant figures showing response to various media:

PT requests	More than 7,100
CC	" " 1,500
Ad response.	" " 7,000
Newsstand response	" " 2,300
Radio and TV	" " 2,300

Church attendance progressively increased during 1980. At year's end we had 11% more people attending than the previous year. Our Bible studies in the region also increased by an overwhelming 78%. A total of 59 people were baptized in 1980.

Appreciation for Ministerial Refreshing Program

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Yesterday was a day that we will long remember. The anticipation and suspense as we all gathered in the Fine Arts Hall followed by your personal presence gave us an unbelievable sense of belonging.

We will try hard to convey to the Church the very positive charge that you gave us. The members will probably think that I am over-reacting when I tell them just how much power, strength and obvious vigor God has given to you.

What a great witness!

Thank you for all that you have done for your spiritual "sons" and "daughters." The refresher program has been strong meat--enhanced by being able to see you in person. We look forward to seeing you in Australia in April.

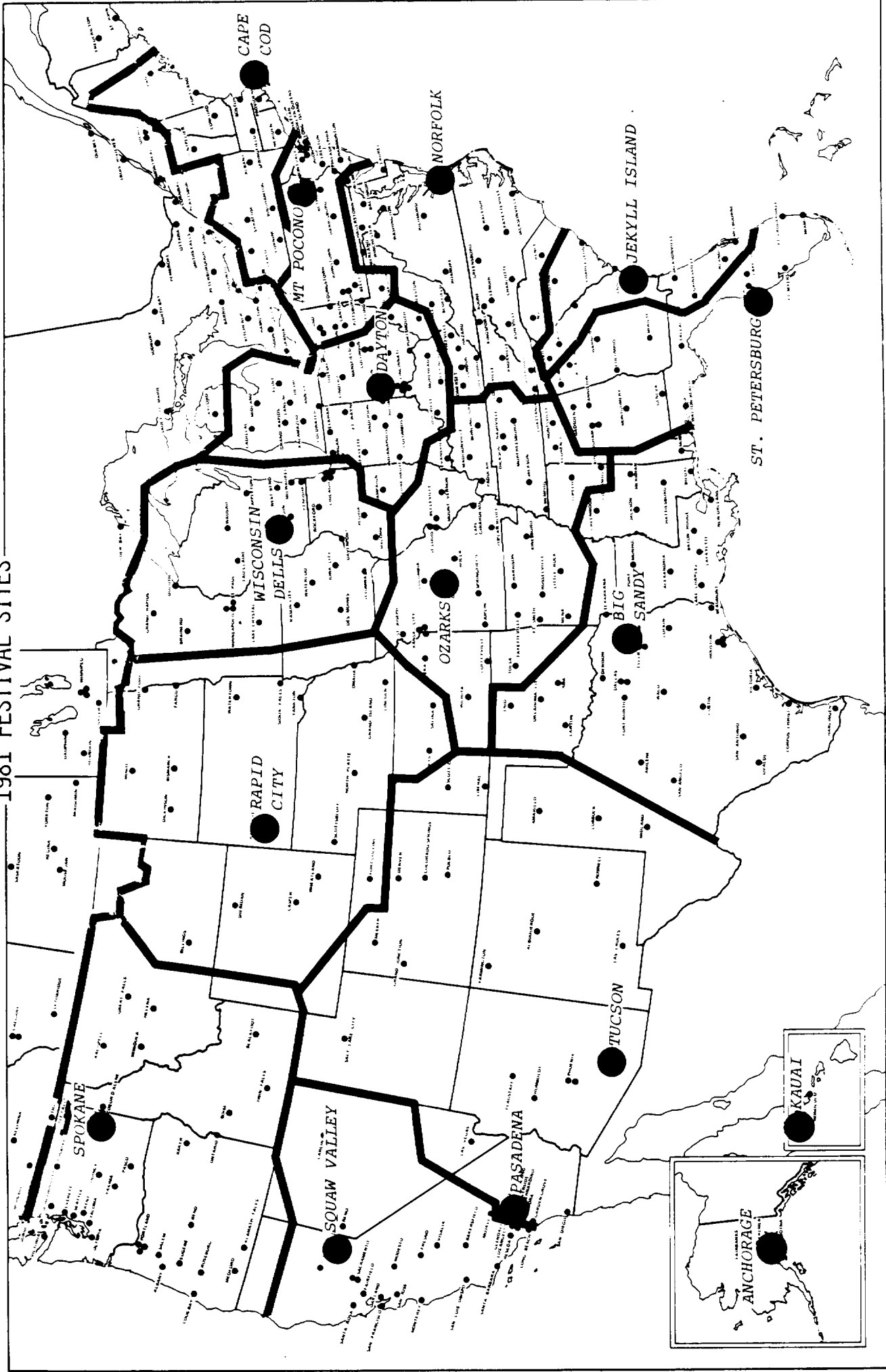
Brian and Gillian Orchard

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

My wife and I have just finished a very busy and comprehensive refresher program. It was a great pleasure to see many friends of long standing, make new friends from around the world, and be taught by some of our more experienced and faithful men.

(Continued on page 6)

1981 FESTIVAL SITES



Having attended ministerial conferences since the late 1950's, and having lived through the subversions of true Bible teaching in the late 60's and 70's, we were especially grateful for the restatement and reaffirmation of many of our basic doctrines. Also helpful were the practical guidelines and instruction that will help us do our job in a uniform way.

Your visit to Pasadena was really a surprise and we were excited to see you in person once again. We hope you will be able to get back to California more often in the future.

Will and Gay Berg

(The following letter from one of our Spanish-speaking ministers appears first in Spanish as he wrote it, followed by the English translation.)

Apreciable Sr. Armstrong:

Por primera vez en mi vida, tengo el honor de dirigirme a usted por medio de una carta, a través de la cual quiero expresar mis agradecimientos, primeramente a Dios por habernos proporcionado para estos tiempos del fin un Apóstol por medio de quien, Jesucristo, Cabeza de la Iglesia de Dios, está dirigiendo esta magna y excelente Obra.

Así mismo, he dado gracias a Dios por haberle inspirado a usted, Sr. Armstrong, la maravillosa idea de llevar los ministros a Pasadena para ser re-instruidos por medio del Programa de Repaso Ministerial, del cual fui partícipe. No se imagina el gran beneficio que hemos obtenido con dicho programa, y principalmente aquellos que no hemos tenido la bendición de asistir a estudiar durante cuatro años en la Institución Ambassador, lo cual no impide que también seamos enseñables.

En realidad el amor de Dios hacia sus hijos es enorme e incomprendible; GRACIAS Sr. Armstrong por seguirnos enseñando acerca de esto en el increíble Plan de Dios en lo que respecta al POTENCIAL HUMANO, para que podamos enseñarlo en nuestras congregaciones (la Iglesia de Dios), de esta forma todos juntos estaremos corriendo en el camino de la perfección.

Gracias así mismo Sr. Armstrong por los señores: Tkach, Rader, Hoeh, Blackwell, Neff, McNair, Hogberg, etc., quienes sirvieron de instrumentos en las manos de Dios para realizar el que todos lleguemos a hablar una misma cosa, para que estemos perfectamente unidos en una misma mente y en un mismo parecer, y todo por medio de su amor mostrado a través del Repaso Ministerial.

Gracias por el Sr. Leon Walker, nuestro director regional en América Latina, por medio de quien usted, Sr. Armstrong, nos está enseñando la unidad del Espíritu, el compañerismo y el trabajo de equipo.

Y finalmente, gracias por Reginald Killingley, Mauricio Pérez y Carlos Gutiérrez por servirnos y ayudarnos al ser traducidos al español las palabras mencionadas por nuestros instructores.

Nuestras oraciones delante de Dios son para que usted siga realizando la Obra, le queremos y le apoyamos.

Herbert y Conchita Cisneros

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

For the first time in my life I have the honor of writing you a letter in which I wish to express my thanks, first of all to God for having given us at this end-time an Apostle through whom Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church of God, is directing this great and magnificent Work.

Likewise, I have given thanks to God for having inspired you, Mr. Armstrong, with the wonderful idea of bringing the ministers to Pasadena to be reinstructed by means of the Ministerial Refreshing Program, in which I took part. You cannot imagine the great benefit we have derived from this program, especially those of us who have not had the blessing of attending and studying for four years at Ambassador College, which does not prevent us from also being teachable.

Truly the love God has towards His children is great and beyond understanding. THANK YOU, Mr. Armstrong, for continuing to teach us about this in God's incredible plan regarding our HUMAN POTENTIAL, so that we can teach it to our congregations (the Church of God), and in this way we will all be following the way of perfectness together.

Thank you also, Mr. Armstrong, for Messrs. Tkach, Rader, Hoeh, Blackwell, Neff, McNair, Hogberg, etc., who served as instruments in God's hands to achieve the goal of having us all speak the same thing, so that we might be perfectly united with the same mind and the same way of thinking, all of this through the love they showed us throughout the refreshing program.

Thank you for Mr. Leon Walker, our regional director for Latin America, through whom you, Mr. Armstrong, are teaching us unity of the Spirit, fellowship and teamwork.

And finally, thank you for Reginald Killingley, Mauricio Perez and Carlos Gutierrez for serving and helping us in translating the words spoken by our instructors into Spanish.

We pray to God that you may continue to carry out the Work, we love you and we're back of you.

Herbert and Conchita Cisneros

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Although we have been back to visit the campus several times since my graduation, this was the first time in nine years that we really felt at home again and a part of what was going on. It really was a refreshing experience for both of us to see the same prevailing atmosphere that we were accustomed to when we were students. The classes really were equal to all the reports from others that we have read in the Pastor General's Report.

We can't help but believe that all of the young people who are being trained, (especially with Big Sandy being reopened) are going to be needed to serve the growth that God is going to give his Work now that it is truly back on the track. We will continue to support this work in the small way that God has allowed us to serve.

Dennis and Karen Johnson

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Greetings from 8,500 feet high...that is, from Bogota, Colombia! Upon our safe return from Pasadena, where we enjoyed the unique privilege of attending the seventh session of the Ministerial Refreshing Program, we found God's little ones in this area with no intention whatsoever of creating any "golden calf," but rather strong, anxiously awaiting their portion of "meat in due season" that they knew was being served to us in Pasadena.

And what could we say about this extraordinary program that had not yet been said! Well, one thing came out clear to us. It was way back in January, 1967, while still in our home town (San Juan, Puerto Rico), that a telegram arrived urging me to get in touch via telephone with the then director of the Spanish Department. Compliance was at once. March 23 of that same year caught me, along with my family (wife and two girls), traveling at 600 mph, 30,000 feet high, with destination: BIG SANDY, TEXAS. Little did we realize then what was in store for us: how many friends, new circumstances in life, and experiences we were to meet and encounter throughout the years.

Unfortunately, some of those friends of many years have not remained with the same mind and spirit. And the agony is felt the more when those very friends were, at a time, very POSITIVE in spite of the situation then prevailing, anxiously waiting for A CHANGE.

After enjoying the privilege of being present at this Ministerial Refreshing Program, we can't help but meditate on what is really happening. Our friends were right in waiting for a much needed change. But sadly enough, it seems that somehow some of them had allowed their minds to be deceived by their own creation of a mental image of the expected change AS THEY THOUGHT IT SHOULD COME ABOUT OR BE IMPLEMENTED. This brings to mind a possible parallel with the Jews of Jesus' time. They were desperately awaiting the promised MESSIAH. But in the process they started looking for a messiah after their own image and DOING. And when the TRUE MESSIAH did come, they could not recognize Him!

Could anyone with an open mind deny that a truly remarkable change-- A GOD INSPIRED CHANGE--is taking place in God's Church today?

May God help us all understand His will! May God help us all to humble ourselves before Him! And may God continue inspiring His apostle and special servant, and those assisting him in this most important WORK!

My wife and I enjoyed very much every minute of our stay in Pasadena. But above all, we enjoyed what we saw, heard, and, why not, what we ate and drank. Already we are missing not necessarily the wine, but THE WAY you and Mr. Apartian served it...and this not to mention that

we are missing also THE WAY the spiritual food was served by every single member of the staff. We are looking forward for the desert in round two!

Pablo Gonzalez

Weekly Letter Comments

After receiving the Collector's Edition of YOUTH 81, members expressed their delight at the new magazine, recognizing its great value and benefit for the young people of the Church. Brethren were also inspired by Mr. Armstrong's February letter and elated to hear of plans to reopen Big Sandy as a Junior College. Our last selection of letters shows that readers continue to find the book, THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL, enjoyable, eye opening and unique.

Adults Delight in YOUTH 81

Let me tell you how very excited I am about the new magazine for the teens, YOUTH 81. My daughters' copies came first and after glancing through them, I just couldn't wait for mine to arrive. I kept borrowing theirs whenever I could get a spare moment to read. The timely articles are geared to young people's interests and are a good length to hold their attention while getting to the point of the subject matter.

But, Mr. Armstrong, the personal letter by you to the teens must be one of your greatest writings. I have read it over four times already and as many times as I have been told the story of the origin of the "get" way as opposed to God's "give" way through sermons, tapes and articles, never has it made such an impression on my mind as it has through this letter to the teens. I am sure you got through to them too.

Mrs. Noriel Waterman (London, NH)

Thank you for the new YOUTH 81. It is excellent! We're in our 60's and feel it will have great appeal to the youth. Thanks to all of you who have labored on it long and hard with love. How wise to utilize the remarkable talents of young people. It should motivate others to contribute.

Mrs. J.E. Mogg (Bushnell, FL)

I want to write and tell you what a fine magazine YOUTH 81 is. The cover is outstanding and so are the articles inside. Thank you for sending it to those who have no children at home any more. The children in the Church are very blessed to have such a magazine.

Mrs. Helen Goble (Fort Morgan, CO)

I read through the first issue of YOUTH 81 and enjoyed it very much. I have no children in the Church, except for some nephews and nieces. I would like a subscription to help me get a deeper understanding of what problems young people face today, and to see their needs. I am glad you were inspired to come up with a magazine just for the young people. It will give them a feeling of belonging and of being special to God.

Mrs. Russie Matlick (Tunnelton, WV)

We thank you for the copy of YOUTH 81; it was most enjoyable and enlightening. May we ask to be put on the mailing list, if possible. We are an older couple with four adult children and it has been many years since we have been in active contact with teenagers.

Many times it has been difficult for us to communicate with, understand and appreciate the youngsters in our church. After reading the magazine I feel that it may help us to understand the young minds and hearts better.

Mr. & Mrs. John P. Cooper (Santa Barbara, CA)

I have just received the Collector's Edition of YOUTH 81. It is a wonderful youth magazine and a great idea. It will help the young people to better understand God's way, thereby helping them to see the importance of obeying God and others over them, and to deal with the numerous problems they face as they are growing up.

Mrs. George B. Franke (Williston, ND)

We received our copy of YOUTH 81 today and were excited at the potential it has opened up. Both young and old will profit from the "now" oriented information it contains.

As a coach who has worked countless hours with youth, I can truly sigh, wishing all young people could have access to YOUTH 81. Thank you (Mr. Armstrong) and the entire staff for another timely masterpiece.

Gary A. Bastie (Houston, TX)

Brethren Inspired by February Co-Worker Letter

I have just received your letter of Feb. 8th. What happy emotions of praise and thanks to God filled my mind and heart. How blessed is God's Church to have such an inspired and dedicated apostle--so filled with love and loyalty to God, His Church and Work.

How wonderful to have a balanced budget! How great to again open beautiful Big Sandy for our youth. How exciting to be able to enlarge our radio and T.V. coverage. How wonderful is our God. His truth is indeed marching on.

Edna Clawson, (Manilla, IN)

Here is some money to be used however you decide is best for getting out the Gospel. Our whole family is all behind you. We are just thrilled over the possibility of opening up Big Sandy, even though our children are only in elementary school. We certainly hope it will be able to open. The children need all the help in right education they can get in order to cope with life and in turn be of help to others.

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Goggans (Lakeland, FL)

I have just read your most inspiring letter of February 8 for the second time. Thank you for keeping us informed of your travels and of the growth of God's Work. It is so inspiring to see what is taking place in the Church and the Work, now that we are on the right track!

Add my name to those who are back of you 100%. I will go over my finances to see just where I can do more to help in the great surge forward in this most serious year of the Work of God so far. I have been blessed with a good solid job and thank God almost every day for all the material blessings He has given me in this troubled and uncertain time. To show my thanks I will gladly give all I possibly can.

Richard L. Grass (Bluffton, IN)

I would like to say that I am more than delighted at the plan to reopen Big Sandy as a junior college. I'm sure there are many hopeful college applicants who feel their chances of getting to Ambassador are greatly improved.

I feel it is very important to keep our children as close to God's teachings as possible and if opportunities like these are not provided, they will look elsewhere for a means to solve their problems.

Donna Shoemaker (Jackson, MO)

We are overjoyed at the news about the opening of Ambassador College in Texas. What great privileges and opportunities our youth have today! Many doors are open to them to experience a healthy, abundant, fulfilling, spiritual life. We just hope and pray that they will take advantage of this.

C. Wallace (Ft. Pierce, FL)

Enclosed is an extra check for this month to help in the outlined plans of the February 8th co-worker letter. All is very exciting, including the junior college plans for beautiful Big Sandy where I attended the Feast six times! Mr. Armstrong, we pray for you daily and are behind you 100%.

Keith Crockett (St. Joseph, MO)

"Incredible Human Potential" Recognized as Unique

I began to read THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL immediately after it arrived and completely finished it today. I can't begin to tell you what tremendous joy it has given me. Next to the Bible, it has the most valuable content of any book I have ever read. It says the plain truth and has the most important content that could be published for mankind. Many questions are answered here in a unique and excellent way. I believe every word and it still continues to occupy my thoughts. I can only express my sincerest, heartfelt thanks that you've given me such complete understanding to strengthen my faith!

Eva S. (Bernkastel-K., West Germany)

I have mentioned this before, but I wanted to say it again--your book, THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL, is the best thing I've read next to the Bible itself. In fact I think it should be used as a Bible handbook. Thank you so much for writing it.

Arthur & Janet Thomas (Grand Junction, MI)

I thank you belatedly for the "incredible" book you wrote for us all-- THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL. I've been in the Church for almost 20 years and I learned more in reading your book, than from any other source. In this book you brought it all together. Thank you.

Mrs. Hazel Farrish (Pullman, WA)

I want to thank you for the unique book THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL. It is the best book Mr. Armstrong ever wrote. I can hardly find the words to express my joy. Mr. Armstrong is truly a God-blessed human being. His vitality at his age of 89 years is simply admirable.

Walter G. (Berlin, West Germany)

I have lately reread your book, THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL, and was amazed at how much more I got out of it compared to when I read it the first time. I am sure the book hasn't changed any, but fortunately I have. It is a book that really can't be understood without enlightenment from God's Spirit. Thank you for it!

Mrs. Donna Brunner (Williams, MN)

Please accept my thanks for that wonderful book, THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL, which I received some time back. Having perused it, I learned a lot from it--things which I've never heard of read. It really is a very thought-provoking book and I shall lend it to my friends who are interested in knowing the future of every human after death. Believe me, I was so taken up by its contents that the more I read, the more I wanted to know.

C.W. (Sri Lanka)

--JOE TKACH, MINISTERIAL SERVICES

ON THE WORLD SCENE

THE RECIPE FOR TEARING DOWN A SOCIETY The February 6, 1981 issue of National Review contains a brilliant essay on America's permissive morality entitled "Is Life a Spectator Sport?" It could almost be subtitled: "The good man is perished out of the earth" (Micah 7:2). Author James Hitchcock shows the tremendous pressure in modern society abetted by the media, to tear down everything decent in moral standards. Basic philosophy: question everything traditional; popularize rebel causes; label moral traditionalists as "prejudiced." Here are excerpts from this essay:

"While the welfare state appears to have been stalled, there has occurred over the last decade an unprecedented extension of the socially and legally permissible limits of personal behavior....

"New moral attitudes, often diametrically opposed to those commonly held twenty years ago, now permeate almost all forms of public discourse... Meanwhile, those traditional seats of authority which might be expected to provide resistance to these trends, especially the family and organized religion, either have made their peace with this 'new morality' or have lapsed into demoralized impotence....

"In part the very nature of the [news] media makes this inevitable. Their whole existence is predicated on the purveyance of 'news,' which gives an automatic advantage to spokesmen for any unfamiliar, and especially any iconoclastic, position. Furthermore, the journalistic profession seems overwhelmingly to attract people who want to think of themselves as advanced and enlightened....

"Moral traditionalists have thus been conditioned, through the schools, the media, and even the churches, to assume that their own beliefs are matters of taste, not based on anything solid or defensible. They are made to feel that they have no right to impede society's changes. An entire industry has sprung up to 'help' people learn to accept with equanimity whatever happens to the world....

"Real discussion of the future course of Western society has in effect been banned from the public sphere by the tacit judgment that certain opinions (concerning the social effects of the decline of organized religion, for example) represent merely unenlightened prejudice and are not to be taken seriously. People who are shaken by the breakdown of the family, by the breakdown of morality, or by violent crimes are assured that their alarm is based on misapprehensions. Nothing is regarded as worth becoming exercised about, since almost all social change is assumed to be for the best. The media, partial to change because change provides automatic drama, endeavor to make life a spectator sport...."

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau