

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

International News

Survey of 1983 Activities in Southern Africa 1983 was a great year for God's Church in Southern Africa. Nearly 87,800 new PLAIN TRUTH subscribers were added during the year--an increase of 33.9% over 1982. In addition, 45,000 copies were distributed by newsstand, making a total circulation of 183,069. By year's end, the circulation in Zimbabwe was 17,237, in Zambia 4,702, and in Mauritius 4,836. Through the renewal program 49,863 subscribers were dropped, making the net gain 37,930.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the 21,000 responses to the advertisement placed in the July 1983 READER'S DIGEST, the first after a lapse of 11 years. Incoming mail for 1983 totaled over 216,500 pieces--an increase of 41.4%. There was a marked increase in donor and co-worker activity in 1983. Donors were up 57.9% and co-workers--who now number 1,464--were up 39.3% as a result of the 684 added last year.

The membership, which is composed of 15 congregations, now totals 1,488, 121 of whom were baptized in 1983. The largest church is in Johannesburg with an average attendance of 560. Attendance is 327 in Cape Town, 248 in Harare, Zimbabwe, and 238 in Durban. Attendance in the other churches varies from 34 (Lusaka, Zambia) to 142 in Pretoria, South Africa. The combined average attendance on the Sabbath is 2,290.

Financially, the year was encouraging, with a 27.7% increase being registered at year's end. This is exceptional because South Africa still suffers from double-digit inflation and a rather depressed economy, mainly due to the drought of 1982-83 and the low gold price.

The tenth Summer Educational Program has just been completed in South Africa. It was the longest and largest camp ever held at the Wagendrift Dam Youth Center at Estcourt, Natal. For three weeks, 143 campers and 65 staff members were involved in 22 different activities. Camp was highlighted by the acquisition of a bigger inboard skiboat, resulting in high standards of water skiing.

For 1984, a very ambitious PLAIN TRUTH promotional program is being undertaken. We plan to mail 1.3 million direct mail letters to householders in the South Africa through a direct mail agency. Two hundred fifty thousand of these letters will go out in January, and a response of seven to ten percent is expected. In February, another ad with a response card will appear in READER'S DIGEST, and this should add many new subscribers. 1984 is off to a great start for God's Church in Southern Africa.

Australian End-of-year Report December ended 1983 on a very encouraging and positive note. Though Australia suffered from high unemployment, a serious recession, crippling droughts, the worst bush fires in living memory and destructive floods, Jesus Christ continued to provide the income

to accomplish the work of His Church in this area of the world. The year ended with an increase in income of 12.3%, after a good December that was up 15.6%.

At the end of the year the number of TV stations carrying "The WORLD TOMORROW" totaled 72 (including smaller relay stations covering remote population centers). This means the telecast now has a potential viewing audience of 95% of the nation's population. Recent ads in TV WEEK magazine drew viewers' attention to the program, and since the ads resulted in improved responses, they will be continued in 1984.

The newsstand program added 9,921 new subscribers as a result of distributing over 80,000 copies each month. Two hundred members are involved in maintaining and servicing the 205 newsstands in 196 outlets throughout the country. Newsstands are positioned in 79% of the major airports, in 90 newsagents, 53 shopping malls, 14 suburban railway stations and four bus terminals.

In 1983, ads appeared twice in the READER'S DIGEST and in five leading magazines. This added nearly 6,500 new subscribers. Advertising will continue in 1984.

New co-workers for 1983 totaled 1,228, up 60.4% over 1982. Baptisms totaled 160, increasing the membership to 3,125 (+3.5%). Although the number of letters processed decreased by 14.9%, the interest shown by those who wrote in was reflected in the 56.8% increase in outgoing envelopes containing literature.

Because of budget restraints, measures were introduced in 1983 to control the growth of The PLAIN TRUTH in Asia, and so by the end of the year the subscription list had decreased by 16.2% to 34,804. The income of this office in 1984 should allow some advertising in selected Asian countries, permitting some moderate growth.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Carefully Monitor Newsstand Magazine Quantities

Recently, Mr. Armstrong enthusiastically approved the distribution of The PLAIN TRUTH in 3,500 supermarkets throughout the United States. However, it is only funded for a six-month test period, at the end of which time he will evaluate the program as to its effectiveness.

In view of Mr. Armstrong's commitment to the program and his desire to see that it succeeds, we are asking you to carefully monitor the number of magazines being distributed through the supermarkets in your local area. We have heard several reports of magazines being stockpiled and not distributed. This adds greatly to the overall cost of the program and lowers its effectiveness.

We hope that these are isolated cases, but if your area is one in which there is a surplus of magazines, please notify us immediately so we can temporarily decrease the quantity on your next month's allocation. In most cases this will take care of the surplus and your allocation can be restored

the following month. Use the Newsstand Depot/Allocation Change form, or call John LaBissoniere at the Newsstand Office.

--Ray Wright, Publishing Services

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSING

Encouraging Response to December Co-worker/Member Letter

Mr. Armstrong's December 18 letter describing the Church's current financial needs drew more comments than any other letter in 1983. The brethren expressed concern over the present situation and responded very generously. Many sent special offerings, including money they had set aside for other things. In their letters, several expressed regret about The PLAIN TRUTH cutbacks in Italy and black Africa, but appreciated being informed of the problem. Those with little to give, including a number of unemployed, said they would pray for God to supply the need.

God's Blessings Poured Out

Many of God's people share accounts of the abundant blessings they have received. These blessings often come in unexpected ways, and involve both spiritual and physical aspects of life. The following inspiring comments illustrate God's generosity.

Last month, in accordance with our pledge to God, we sent you 10% of the income of our corporation. Things were down and out, you might say. This month God has fulfilled His pledge and in 30 short days our business income has grown almost 400%. We are most pleased to send our tithe check for spreading God's Word.

D.H.--President (Woodland, ME)

With this check we have finished our third tithe year. We want to say it has been an unbelievable year filled with blessings, one following another. Two weeks before the Feast, my husband received a large raise. Just today, after returning home from the Feast, my husband's grandmother gave me two coats, including one very beautiful fur.

Not only have we been blessed financially, but we have been able to share with others--entertaining more than we had in any previous year. It truly does pay both physically and spiritually to keep God's laws. Our family has become closer to each other and God during this past year. It doesn't seem possible, but we were able to give three times more in offerings than any other year!

Mr. & Mrs. D.K. (Grafton, WI)

Please accept the enclosed money order as a first fruit offering. Even in a very dry, hot summer God has blessed us with a bountiful harvest, showing us once again that He is faithful in keeping His promises.

M.W. (Paris, OH)

We are sending the tithes on our goats. We have three does that had twins and these are their first kids. In fact, all our does

had twins this year. We have sold six goats we are tithing on, besides the firstborn we are giving to God. I am very thankful we have this to give because my husband is 85 and I am 75, and we still have health enough to be able to take care of them and make a garden.

Mr. & Mrs. L.C. (Big Sandy, TX)

If someone had told me ten or fifteen years ago that I'd be routinely setting aside twenty and periodically thirty percent of my gross salary and sending ten to twenty percent of it to Pasadena, California each week, I'd have told that individual that he'd better begin sleeping in a padded room!

If this person had gone on to say that not only would I be doing this and paying thirty percent in taxes, but that I'd also be prospering, always having enough not only for essentials but also for many comforts and luxuries, I would have informed him that regrettably it was already too late for a mere padded cell--would he care for a lobotomy?

Yet, here I am, finding myself doing exactly those things. Despite the fact that "it doesn't look good on paper," I seem to be more than making ends meet on less than forty percent of my gross income. Maybe God uses different paper!

J.H. (College Point, NY)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

TROUBLES IN THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (CONTINUED) Last week we began a presentation on the growing rift between the Vatican and its increasingly wayward American church. Now to continue. In its November 28, 1983 issue, TIME magazine ran an article entitled, "A Struggle to Keep the Faith: American Catholics Are Torn Between Change and Loyalty." The report shows why the Vatican is so concerned about wayward tendencies in its American body. Simply put, they can upset the faith around the world.

Beneath the Vatican's stern and watchful gaze, the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. sometimes must seem like an unruly teenager.... Like any prudent parent, Pope John Paul II is seeking to exercise a firm hand without alienating. Consider some of the family conflicts over the past few weeks:

In Washington, D.C., one-third of the nation's 292 active Catholic bishops attended a meeting that was sponsored in part by groups advocating the ordination of women.... In Seattle, a special papal delegate has been examining Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle, an outspoken antinuclear activist who has welcomed homosexual groups to his cathedral and allowed liturgical experimentation. The Pope has directed other American bishops to investigate the 500 religious orders in the U.S. as well as the country's 300 seminaries....

In short, John Paul would seem to have trouble on his hands with the U.S. church, the richest and fourth largest national branch of Roman Catholicism.... Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago,

who is as close to the Pope as any U.S. prelate, insists that "it is wrong to say that the Pope considers the U.S. church worse off than the others. But he does see it as a very important link with the rest of the world. Whatever happens in the U.S., it's just a matter of time before it happens elsewhere."

Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul summed up the situation in a baseball analogy: "If a .150 hitter goes into a slump, it doesn't make much difference to the team. But if a .350 hitter goes into a slump, the manager really gets worried."

On John Paul's mind is one disturbing fact about the U.S. church: It is losing some of its most dedicated workers. Over the past 17 years the ranks of U.S. nuns have declined by 61,000 to 121,000, and the number of priests has barely grown despite a 12% increase in the number of baptized Catholics....

The liberal Jesuits at the seminary in Berkeley, California, barely speak to their colleagues across the bay at the University of San Francisco.... A conservative priest at the university protests, "We have priests saying Mass in sports shirts and some using French bread." Similar views are stated even more colorfully by the WANDERER (circulation: 35,000), an extreme right-wing Catholic weekly published in St. Paul, which is said to be closely read in the Vatican. This month the paper thundered against "secularist sex education, dissident priests and theologians, politicized Catholic agencies and aberrant liturgies."

The same issue of TIME carried an accompanying sidebar article on the extremist archbishop of Seattle, Raymond Hunthausen.

On a cloudy morning last January the grieving couple arrived at St. Michael's Church in Olympia, Wash., to bury their only son. He had died at 37, leaving a wife and two young children. The parents' first anxiety developed even before the funeral Mass began: many of the worshippers entered the nave with cries of joy, and the celebrant, Father Paul Dalton, was clad in festive mod vestments.... At the Communion, both Catholics and non-Catholics went forward to receive the consecrated bread and wine.

Worse was to follow. A dancer appeared and glided through the sanctuary; then came a clown, carrying balloons, who began skipping around the coffin chanting, "Today my brother and sister are dancing together in heaven." The mother, already deeply offended and in tears, only later realized that the clown's voice was that of her own daughter. After the daughter tied the balloons to the coffin, pallbearers in work shirts carried the coffin to the dead man's Chevrolet pickup truck.

Since...Raymond ("Dutch") Hunthausen became Archbishop of Seattle in 1975, his flock of 287,000 has become accustomed to such unusual rituals. The Vatican has been inundated with complaints from conservative parishioners, including one from the parents of the man whose coffin was decorated with balloons. Three weeks ago, Pope John Paul dispatched Archbishop James Hickey of Washington, D.C., on an extraordinary "apostolic visitation" to probe what Hunthausen has wrought.

A native of Montana, the energetic, soft-spoken Hunthausen, 62, is known as the "peace Archbishop." He preaches unilateral disarmament, refuses to pay half of his income tax as a protest against Pentagon spending, and has denounced the local nuclear submarine base as the "Auschwitz of Puget Sound." During his week-long visitation, Hickey said he was not concerned with political issues but only with hearing out priests, nuns, and parishioners, and among the 60 Washingtonians he spoke to there was no shortage of praise for Hunthausen; 252 of the 280 priests in the archdiocese signed a petition of support. "A lot of us see the Archbishop as a symbol of unconditional love here," said Pat Cervenka, a Catholic housewife who went to the airport to hand Hickey her own pro-Hunthausen letter. "The culture in the U.S. is different from Rome."

The weekly RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE reported in its September 12, 1983 issue that Catholics in Seattle recently expressed their indignation at Archbishop Hunthausen's decision to welcome the convention of Dignity, the Catholic gay organization, by picketing a Mass and taking a full-page advertisement in a daily newspaper. About 600 Catholic homosexual men and lesbians attended the convention over the Labor Day weekend. Archbishop Hunthausen, who was in Rome at the time, welcomed them in a videotaped message and permitted them to use St. James Cathedral for a Mass, where about 100 priests in vestments concelebrated.

Differing Views on War and Peace

Another widening gulf between the American bishops and their counterparts in Europe--especially France and West Germany--is the approach to defense in the nuclear age. Last spring, the U.S. bishops brought forth a pastoral letter entitled "The Challenge of Peace." It came close to the political position of those supporting a nuclear freeze. It gave only "strictly conditional acceptance" of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, the backbone of U.S. and NATO strategy. It further called for a "no first strike" policy, running counter to NATO options to use such weapons at any time in the event of attack from the East. Critics of the pastoral letter said it came perilously close to an endorsement of "peace at any price."

At the same time, the Conference of Catholic Bishops in West Germany took a position virtually opposite to that of their American counterparts (see "On the World Scene," May 6, 1983, p. 9). And recently, a plenary session of the Catholic bishops of France issued a document on the issue of nuclear arms and defense, titled, "Win the Peace." The vote in support of the document was 93-2. Excerpts follow:

Because the survival of humanity is at stake, there is no cause that can justify the outbreak of a nuclear war. The same applies to other forms of suicidal warfare which are less often discussed, even though they too are being prepared for: chemical and biological warfare. Moreover, by centering too much attention on nuclear war we run the risk of minimizing "conventional" modern warfare.

Nobody wants war.... Yet some countries are bent on reaping the benefits of warfare without paying the price of war: By brandishing its threat, they make permanent use of blackmail....

There is no question here of cultivating a Manichaeian view of the world--all the evil on one side, all the good on the other. The West is also ailing. Materialism--whether theoretical, as in communist societies, or practical, as in the West--is a deadly disease of humanity. And Marxist-Leninist states do not hold a monopoly on imperialism.... But it would be unfair to simply state and accept the conflict of ideologies while closing one's eyes to the domineering and aggressive character of Marxism-Leninism, which holds that everything, even a nation's hopes for peace, must be used as a tool for world conquest.

In their efforts to avoid war, peaceful nations could fall prey to other forms of violence and injustice: colonization, alienation, deprivation of freedom and identity. Pushed to its ultimate consequences, peace at any price leads a nation to all sorts of capitulations. Unilateral disarmament could even encourage aggressive behavior on the part of neighbors by presenting them with the temptation of an easy prey.

Christ's nonviolence, the forgiveness he preaches, is the salt which alone can save the Earth from the corruption that is violence. [But] in our world of violence and injustice, it is the duty of politicians to safeguard the peace of the community for which they are responsible.... In international relations, unfortunately, there is no authority powerful and effective enough to impose that state of law. Therefore individual countries cannot be denied the right of legitimate defense against external threats as well as internal perils.... Given the state of violence and sin in which the world exists, it is the duty of politicians and military officials to defuse the blackmail to which the nation could be subjected.

The church does not encourage unconditional pacifism. The church has never advocated unilateral disarmament, for it is aware that unilateral disarmament could serve to kindle the violence of an aggressive military, political and ideological complex.

In a recent address to world leaders, which was released in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, Pope John Paul II, while decrying wars and terrorism in the world, nevertheless criticized what he called "pacifism which is cowardice." Here is an ASSOCIATED PRESS dispatch, dated December 23, 1983.

Warning that men and not missiles kill, Pope John Paul II called Friday for world leaders to free themselves from the "slavery" of power worship and a war mentality. While calling for a fundamental change in the heart for man, John Paul criticized "pacifism which is cowardice" in the face of injustice, the arms race and rich countries that spend millions on arms while poor countries starve....

The pontiff said the world today is plagued by "implacable wars," "fanatical terrorism" and widespread violations of basic human rights. But he added, "It is man who kills and not his sword, or in our day, his missiles."

Without dealing in specifics, John Paul said world leaders must avoid "political opportunism" and "dangerous adventures"... But John Paul said he was not advocating passive acceptance of injustice just for the sake of peace. "The person who deeply desires peace rejects any kind of pacifism which is cowardice or the simple preservation of tranquillity," he said without elaborating.

It is in the largely Roman Catholic countries of Europe, such as France and Italy, where the pacifistic peace movements are weakest. A recent report in the LOS ANGELES TIMES revealed that:

In Europe, fashionable ideas usually spread from France. However, the pacifist, anti-nuclear mood so popular among European intellectuals and leftists these days did not come from France. The mood, in fact, hardly exists here.... "Not only is France not strongly pacifist," said Michel Tatu, defense analyst for the respected French newspaper LE MONDE, in a recent interview, "but it has become strongly anti-pacifist."

The present French mood, so out of step with that of European intellectuals elsewhere, was reflected recently in an angry book by a young philosopher condemning pacifism, and in a pastoral letter from the French Catholic bishops supporting the principle of nuclear deterrence. In the book [THE FORCE OF VERTIGO] Andre Glucksmann heaps scorn upon the American Catholic bishops and the pacifist strain in their pastoral letter earlier this year on nuclear war. Scientists such as Albert Einstein, Glucksmann recalls, took part in developing an atomic bomb out of fear that Adolf Hitler would produce one first. "My good fathers," Glucksmann addresses the American bishops, "in confidence, would you have dared to reply to Einstein: Rather Hitler than the nuclear bomb?"...

The pastoral letter of the French Roman Catholic bishops was looked on as far to the right of the American one. The French bishops issued theirs on November 8, just a few days after publication of the Glucksmann book. The bishops supported the need for defensive nuclear weapons so strongly that, according to the French press, French military officers were astounded and pleased.... "In a world where man is still a wolf to other men," the letter said, "turning oneself into a lamb may perhaps provoke a wolf."

Several factors seem to account for the absence of a pacifist mood in France. The most significant evidently are that France, unlike West Germany, has a nuclear force of 98 missiles of its own, and, unlike both West Germany and Britain, refuses to allow American missiles on its soil.

The difference between France and other European countries on pacifism may also be rooted in the distant past. In an interview with a Paris newspaper, Glucksmann traced the issue to the history of religion and philosophy in Europe. Pointing out that there is a line across Europe that separates the socialists of the north from the socialists of the south on the issue of

pacifism, Glucksmann said, "The line rests on a cultural division that recalls that of the end of the Renaissance between the (Protestant) Reformation and the (Roman Catholic) Counter-Reformation." Elaborating on the religious argument, LE MONDE's Tatu agreed it is no accident that pacifism is weakest in Catholic France and strongest in Protestant countries. The Catholic Church in Europe, Tatu said, always identifies with the state [and its defense], while the Protestant churches are against hierarchy and close to their parishes.

Back in the United States, the tenets of the U.S. bishops' "peace pastoral" are now being implemented in Catholic schools, along virtually the same kind of curricular guidelines as recommended by the leftist National Education Association. As the WALL STREET JOURNAL of December 27, 1983 remarked:

If you thought that creeping pacifism-in-the-classroom affected only those public schools in thrall to the National Education Association [NEA], think again. The largest group of private schools in the U.S., the Roman Catholic parochial schools, is running up the white flag, too, and urging teachers to turn students into "peacemakers."... Jonathan Schell [author of FATE OF THE EARTH, the nuclear freeze bible] is lauded; the anti-war group called Educators for Social Responsibility is touted as a source for further readings; so is the U.N. Public Information office....

The implications for the future are thus quite grave. Will the Vatican ultimately come to the conclusion--after the Reagan era passes--that the United States can no longer be counted on to defend the Western world--and that only a European-based security system can provide the protection? And what if the Vatican should, in the future, determine that the rebellious Catholic Church in America is beyond help and not worth saving?

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau