

# PASTOR'S REPORT

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

VOL. 3, NO. 9

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

MARCH 19, 1979

## FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings this time from rainy Pasadena! We are continuing to have cold but very clear weather for which we are all thankful. Also, we are most thankful that the receiver is gone. Now we can get back to the business of doing God's Work without the distractions this recent legal furor and receivership have caused.

Mr. Armstrong is fine and is looking forward to seeing the area coordinators this Wednesday. They are now arriving, and Burk McNair and I were able to have a fine lunch with Elbert Atlas. Arriving back at campus, we were able to greet Tony Hammer, Guy Engelbart and Carl McNair who had also just arrived for our conferences which begin tomorrow morning and continue through Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Leroy Neff is now installed in an office, and we are pleased to have him on our "team" here at headquarters. I know he will make a fine headquarters coordinator, and he is deeply respected by all of the older members who have known him for so many years.

Vince Szymkowiak left just a few days ago for Joplin--my old hometown--to replace Don Mason who is moving to the pastorate in Tulsa. I certainly wish them both well in their new responsibilities and hope to see them again soon.

We are now moving ahead with plans for evangelistic campaigns in chief cities this spring and early summer! We will plan to run the full-page ads giving our side of the story of this recent attack and include a mention of campaigns in these ads, as well as running smaller special ads besides, announcing the campaigns with times and places. Since we are getting more media attention at this time anyway, we hope to use this to the advantage of God's Work to get out the gospel. So please PRAY for God's guidance on our efforts and for the success of these evangelistic campaigns!

Mr. Rader, incidentally, is all for these campaigns and is freeing up money from the media budget for this purpose.

Speaking of budgetary matters, perhaps it would be helpful to some of you to explain how the income is up and yet there is still a cash crisis?!? This is truly the case, fellows, because of factors which are quite real. First, this time of year is normally below par for income. So we normally borrow an extra \$1 million or so and then pay it back after the spring holy day offerings. Additionally, as you may have read, a loan for \$1.3 million was called by United California Bank the minute they heard about the "receivership." And, the receiver himself spent about \$1.6 million paying off the auto line (paying for the lease cars

for the whole year) and the construction line in the same way. We would have spaced this out over at least a year. So when you add up these figures plus many thousands extra for our legal fees and other emergency expenses during this crisis, you come up with a minimum of \$3 million plus the \$1 million we were not able to borrow at this time of year because our credit was withdrawn due to the receivership.

Therefore, our working capital for the first 2½ months of 1979 has been depleted by at least \$4 million! Yet, it is a temporary cash crisis since we do not have to pay back the loans, we will be paying off much less in lease car and construction expenses since most of this is now prepaid, and our normal income should be rising throughout the spring holy days.

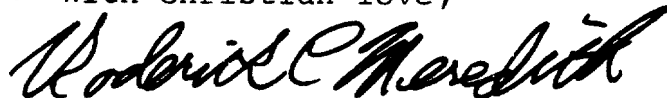
Actually, we are having a slight increase in mail income for the Work over last year--for which we are very thankful. And if all of us loyally rally to the cause and cause those members who are "sitting on their hands" regarding tithes and offerings to become positively turned on again, the income will take a spurt forward! So I hope the above explanation does help many of you who have been "concerned" about these matters and have wondered if we are trying to lay off men because things are "shaky" out here and this type of thing. That is not the problem at all. There is a temporary cash flow crisis, and we do need to be careful for the next few months. But, all in all, the brethren of God's Church worldwide are responding magnificently and the Church of God--under the leadership of Jesus Christ--is solid as a rock!

So let's all realize this more than ever and encourage our brethren to rally behind the leadership of Jesus Christ and his faithful human servant Mr. Armstrong. And let's all try not to listen to every negative rumor that is thrown up in the air repeatedly by dissidents every few days, it seems.

Mr. Armstrong has approved the idea of Mrs. Luker coordinating the input and ideas to help our ministerial wives have a greater part in --and reward from--the ministry. I was able to have a talk with Lee Ann and three other ministers--including Denny, of course, and get their input about this recently. Lee Ann and some of the sabbatical ministers' wives have some very fine ideas, and we will be getting these out to you soon. Additionally, I hope that many of you wives in the field will send in to us here at P.A.D. your comments and suggestions about this program, and we will certainly pass them along.

Finally, fellows, let's all really get close to our God as we approach the Passover. We will all soon be looking solemnly at that bread which was broken to symbolize the fact that we can be healed through Jesus' stripes; and at that wine picturing the agonizing death that had to occur to pay for our sins--even we in the ministry. So we must be sure to study and meditate on the meaning of this upcoming Passover. Let's pray fervently that God will help all of us to surrender ourselves more completely to him that he might pour out upon us his spiritual power and blessings more than ever before in this age.

God be with you as you yield to Him. With Christian love,



Roderick C. Meredith

## CLARIFICATION OF PASSOVER PRACTICES AND EXPLANATIONS

Several have asked for a clarification of our Passover practices and explanations. Some have wondered about a study paper on "The Passover in the Bible and the Church Today," as well as GTA's comments on the subject in his book The Real Jesus.

Please understand that neither of the above writings constitute official Church doctrine or practice. Any variation of doctrinal explanation contained in them has not been approved by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Consequently, there is no official change of practice or explanation this year for any part of the Passover observance or story.

While there are a number of questions that need eventual clarification, we have been so busy with other things during this time of trial and trauma that we have not been able to make a study of these details and present them to Mr. Armstrong for approval. Hopefully we will be able to get to these matters before Passover of next year.

However, there should be no confusion about the date of the Passover. We still observe it on the evening of the 14th of Nisan (which falls this year on Tuesday, April 10th). Neither of the above sources raised any issues that would change the Church's Passover observance from the eve of Nisan 14 to some other date. Therefore, there should be no question about when to keep this service.

--Wilbur A. Berg, Pastoral Administration Dept.

## "NEWS SUMMARY" TO GET NEWS OF THE WORK OUT FASTER TO BRETHREN

A new idea has been born which should help to solve our brethren's yearning for later news of events in God's Work, especially during these trying times when each day seems to bring new surprises in the Church's confrontation with the state of California.

During Mr. Rader's report to members who attended special services in the Hall of Administration last Thursday evening, the brethren expressed their desire for regular updates on what is happening in the Work of God. Even though the Worldwide News has contained fine indepth reports, they complained that the news is dated by two to three weeks when they get it.

Although the ministry is being kept up to date through the Pastor's Report, we now have a way to put late news contained in its pages into a special weekly "News Summary" which the brethren can receive in church every Sabbath!

The "News Summary" will usually be two pages (a single sheet of paper) duplicated locally in advance of the Sabbath every week, and then distributed to all heads of households at services on the Sabbath. (Perhaps a small donation of a dollar or so per person per year in each local area would take care of all paper and duplicating costs in each church.)

Expanded coverage of all summarized news, plus additional related articles and reports, will continue to appear as usual in the Worldwide News approximately every other week.

--Pastor's Report Staff

## BRETHREN MAKE UNIFIED STAND FOR THE CHURCH

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### "Ecclesiastical Lock-Out"

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This time the brethren's presence in services, it was hoped, would forestall the receiver's attempting to take control of the premises, or tampering with the records before the Church could comply with a stipulation in the court order that would keep the receiver from discharging his responsibilities. Judge Title wrote into his order that the receivership could be stayed (rendered inactive) IF a \$1 million dollar bond were posted within 48 hours. In essence, if this condition were met the receiver would be unable to take control while the Church

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So this time we were concerned about keeping the dapper Mr. Ray from trying to press himself into service (reportedly at \$200 an hour). As it turned out, the receiver did call Mr. Rader about Thursday noon to say that he was coming! After a heated exchange between them on the telephone, it was decided that two of our attorneys would confer with him at a place off campus. (If he had come to the campus, he could have started charging for his time on assignment and in subsequent court appearances -- an expensive proposition.) Word about the receiver's threatened takeover Thursday afternoon electrified the Hall of Administration, and everyone began to brace themselves for another possible confrontation with a receiver.

### Casting for Bonds

The Church's attorneys put all our "lines into the water" in order to explore every possibility of obtaining a bond. Bondsmen, like other lenders, vary with their rates and amounts of collateral (in cash or assets) the Church would be required to put up for the million dollar bond. They wanted 33%, then 50% and finally 100% collateral. But for unexplained reasons, the bondsmen, who are licensed by the State of California, let us know they could not provide us with a bond.

Meanwhile the call went out to the brethren worldwide for a special offering in case a technicality forced us to use a money bond. Now that a surety bond has been posted, the special offering is necessary just in case we must acquire a bond should, for some far out reason, the court finds the sureties unacceptable after all.

### "Surety Bond" the Immediate Solution

The special offerings began coming in, but not to the extent needed to cover the bond. Along the way our lawyers became aware of a perfectly legal and sound way of providing the bond coverage in short order. The brethren in California were asked if they would like to volunteer to put up surety pledges for whatever amount they felt they could afford. (Only residents of California are eligible.) Mr. Rader asked only for amounts within our means, and certainly not our homes, to bridge the crisis. The result was a whopping total of \$3,749,689 in individual sureties as of this writing!

The question still remained: Would Judge Title accept this kind of bond? A visit to court Thursday by lawyers from both sides indicated that he would, but it had to be two million dollars instead of the one million originally required, since he said some of the sureties might not be acceptable for one reason or another. Our brethren easily met the need with \$2,374,307 worth of sureties! On Friday the Attorney General argued in court that the amount of the surety bond was too low, and then he argued that it should be in cash and not in surety pledges. But the judge did not accept either of those two objections, stating that the sureties were legal. It remains that the attorney general has ten days

to find a reason to reject the bonds, or to appeal the proceedings in some way.

Meeting the press outside court Friday, Deputy Attorney General Lauren Brainard admitted his office was "stymied" by our latest action. He complained that "things are happening so fast it was hard to keep up with everything." And so another battle in the Church's fight against the state's intrusion of our civil and religious liberties has been won, but as Mr. Armstrong has repeatedly stated, "the war is not over." Mr. Armstrong acknowledges that our brethren deserve a lot of credit for their dedication and sacrifice.

In commenting about our victory on Friday morning, Mr. Rader reminded the brethren in the Hall of Administration that "God is still on His throne. Without His vigil and His help none of this would have been possible. I am afraid the state /of California/ doesn't really believe that God is on His throne, doesn't really believe that...our spiritual resources are most important. They probably will never accept that because they have a different image in their mind of what God's Church is all about, and what you people are all about. Really, if they did understand their whole attitude would be different. But we can't expect too much too soon, therefore the battle goes on!"

#### Special Offerings Still Necessary

Mr. Rader emphasized that we still need a million dollars in cash just in case. He felt we must reach the million dollar mark this week because "there is always the possibility that the entire suretyship undertakings by the individuals could be challenged in the state's desperate effort to regain its control and foothold over this Church and its property. They talk about wanting an audit, but they want to own it and control it and to determine how everything can be done...so we must keep those extra offerings coming in for that 'price of freedom' imposed on us by the court." To date (March 19) the total amount in special offerings thus far received is in excess of \$400,000.

The Attorney General's perseverance is only exceeded by the tenacity of God's Church which has "nothing to hide, but much to protect," namely our constitutional rights!

--Pastor's Report Staff

#### MAIL BEGINS TO PICK UP

The crisis with the receivership for the past several weeks brought the mail to God's Work to a very point. Here is a quick summary of how the mail has fluctuated during the past weeks:

Feb 2	32,404	letters, cards, etc.
Feb 9	34,844	"
Feb 16	19,868	"
Feb 23	12,204	"
Mar 2	18,967	"
Mar 9	28,173	"
Mar 16	25,000	approx. "

The recent increases in our mail (especially during the weeks of March

9 and 16) have been helped by the resumption of PLAIN TRUTH renewal mailings from the Circulation Department. Responses are also coming in to a recent "Co-Worker Newsletter," and literature offer to PLAIN TRUTH subscribers.

The responses to Mr. Armstrong's co-worker and member letters are reported as being exceptionally good -- but since they are going directly to other offices, we have no definite statistics on them here in MPC.

A note of special interest: around 8,000 special donation letters (not included in the tabulation above) from brethren responding to the cash bond appeal were processed by MPC last week.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

#### PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

The second printing of Mr. Herbert Armstrong's book, The Incredible Human Potential, is about to hit the commercial book world. Our own publishing house, "Everest House," will publish and distribute through the book trade. The book has a royal blue cover this time and has been re-typeset to make it more commercially acceptable to the book buying public. We have timed the publication for the big spring book buying market.

The prestigious New York Academy of Sciences has given our Everest House book, Color in Plants and Flowers by John and Susan Proctor, an "honorable mention." This means that the academy, with a membership of 28,000 scientists, has selected the book as one of the ten best science books of the year. There will be a formal presentation in New York on April 17.

--Roger Lippross, Publishing Services Director

#### STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE CHURCH'S STAND DURING RECENT CRISIS

(Editor's note: The following two statements were sent to Mr. Rader by Dr. J. Gordon Melton, Director of the Institute For the Study of American Religion. Mr. Rader asked that they be reprinted as an example of one who, though of a different biblical belief and orientation, understands the gravity of the issues and is supportive of the Church's efforts to defend itself from the unwarranted and unconstitutional attacks by the Attorney General of the state of California.)

#### **ATTACKS ON THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD TERMED THE GREATEST ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT THE FIRST AMENDMENT IN THIS DECADE**

The attempt to redefine the Worldwide Church of God as a "public trust" and its property as "in a sense, public" is the most flagrant attack on the freedom of religion and the independent status of religious institutions in this country in many years, said Dr. J. Gordon Melton, Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion. Dr. Melton, who is also the Chicago representative of the Alliance for the Preservation of Religious Liberty (APRL), made his statement following a conversation with Mr. Ellis LaRavia, recently placed in charge of the Worldwide Church of God headquarters operation, and Church attorney Ralph Helge.

The effect of the actions of Mr. Tapper, the assistant attorney general in Pasadena, California, has been to place all churches under state control and put strict limits on how they can spend money and acquire and dispose of property. The possibility that such precedent-setting efforts will gain some credence is heightened by the public reaction to the tragedy of Guyana. Such backlash effects must not be permitted to take place.

A complete copy of Dr. Melton's statement is enclosed. Dr. Melton is the author of two definitive works on American religious groups; THE DIRECTORY OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES (Garland, 1977) and THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS (Consortium, 1978). As the Director of ISAR, he has followed the life of the Worldwide Church of God for many years. In 1977 he joined the newly formed Alliance for the Preservation of Religious Liberty, which has initiated an action program related to the infringements on religious freedom focused on the small religious bodies of America. The Alliance was particularly active in opposing the process called "deprogramming."

STATEMENT BY DR. J. GORDON MELTON ON THE CURRENT SITUATION  
OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

In my capacity as Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion, I have been an observer of the Worldwide Church of God for many years. During the 1970s it has continued to be controversial, strife-ridden and rent with several schisms. However, until the last two weeks, its problems have been internal and reflective of growth, the natural dissent that tends to arise in religious bodies over doctrines and practices, and polemics due to the Church's distinct positions contra mainline Christian beliefs.

In recent weeks this situation has changed drastically. Internal dissent has been brought into the court, and based upon as yet unproven accusations, the State of California's attorney general's office has entered one area of church dispute on the side of a group of former members of the Church. The grounds for the entrance of the office into this ecclesiastical dispute is the unheard of opinion of Assistant Attorney General Lawrence Tapper that the assets of religious bodies are somehow "public" property, and in the interests of the people he may seize and examine the church records to determine if money is being properly spent.

The attempt to redefine the Worldwide Church of God as a "public trust" and its property as "in a sense, public" is the most flagrant attack on the freedom of religion and the independent status of religious institutions in this country in many years. The intent of Mr. Tapper's action would extend the authority of the government into the private life of a religious institution, and in open disregard of the Constitution, set limits upon how a Church chooses to extend its mission, spread its message, obtain and dispose of property and, by extention, what it believes (since action is the natural result of beliefs).

I personally could not be a member of the Worldwide Church of God. It has a theocratic system of government which places all authority in one man, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. The doctrine of the Church denies



major Protestant perspectives on the Trinity, grace and salvation. In the past the Church has tended to be separatist; it has denounced other Christian bodies; it has seen itself as the unique instrument of God in today's world. These beliefs, which make it impossible for me to be a part of it, have also been a major factor in making the Church an unpopular institution in many quarters.

But possibly its unpopularity is the central issue. Would the attorney general's office attempt such unprecedented action against more established religious bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church, the United Methodist Church or the Protestant Episcopal Church? Yet, if the actions of the past two weeks are allowed to go unchallenged and are sustained in the present adjudication, such action will declare all churches, synagogues and religious institutions, operating in the State of California, public property and subject to state-dictated limitation.

I am a pastor within the United Methodist Church. My congregation is in no sense a public corporation nor are its assets public property. As a pastor, I am in no wise accountable to the state's authority (beyond that, of course, of any citizen were he to commit illegal actions) for how I administer the Church's affairs. I am not accountable to former members, either those who might have voluntarily withdrawn or any who might have been put out of the Church by due process. I am accountable, my congregation is accountable, only to its present members, the bishop placed over us, and his duly appointed representatives, and the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church.

One can not help but feel that this ludicrous action of Mr. Tapper and his associates are a rebound from the Guyana tragedy of the People's Temple. Not only are some of the accusations similar (hoarding gold) but the vehemence of the reaction to unproven and now (demonstratively proven) unfounded charges indicates that advantage is being taken of an unusually hostile climate of opinion.

We can not allow either the unpopularity of the Worldwide Church of God or the Guyana fallout to silence our voice. I call upon all committed to perserving the integrity of our religious institutions and the freedom to propagate our beliefs, set our own priorities, and participate in the American religious scene, to join forces at this hour. Raise the hue and cry. Let all know that we will not stand by and allow our freedoms to be subverted.

JUDGE STEVEN S. WEISMAN  
THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(RETIRED)

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February 21, 1979

Romain O. Nelsen, Esq.  
Lynberg & Nelsen  
Suite 1000, 800 West Sixth Street  
Los Angeles, CA. 90017

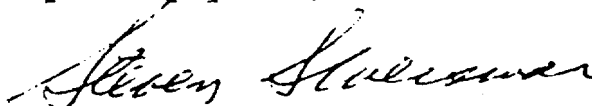
Gentlemen:

You may or may not be aware that, since January 2, 1979, my time has been devoted exclusively to my duties as Receiver in the case of People of the State of California vs. Worldwide Church of God, L.A.S.C. No. C267607.

Unfortunately, my physical limitations have made it necessary for me to resign from this arduous assignment.

This is to advise that, effective on or about March 1, 1979, I shall once again be available, as my calendar permits, for matters involving Orders of Reference, Special Master assignments, arbitration and appointments as consultant for Federal, State and local Governmental agencies.

Very truly yours,

  
STEVEN S. WEISMAN

SSW:pp

(Editor's Note: This letter shows the original receiver, ex-judge Steven S. Weisman, is currently soliciting the entire legal profession for work -- considered unconscionable by most in the profession. Upon inquiry, it was learned that he can be hired for \$75.00 per hour, having asked \$150 per hour from the Work of God!)

# NEWS SUMMARY

WORLDWIDE EDITION

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The Attorney General's perseverance is only exceeded by the tenacity of God's Church which has "nothing to hide, but much to protect," namely our constitutional rights!

#### TURNING ADVERSITY TO OUR ADVANTAGE

Mr. Roderick C. Meredith announced to the ministers in the Pastor's Report that "we are now moving ahead with plans for evangelistic campaigns in chief cities this spring and early summer! We will plan to run the full-page ads giving our side of the story of this recent attack and include a mention of campaigns in these ads, as well as running smaller special ads besides, announcing the campaigns with times and places. Since we are getting more media attention at this time anyway, we hope to use this to the advantage of God's Work to get out the gospel. So please PRAY for God's guidance on our efforts and for the success of these evangelistic campaigns!"