

PASTOR'S REPORT

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SHOULD GOD'S PEOPLE TAKE ACTIVE PART IN LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

We need to go to GOD'S WORD to understand our relationship in and with our respective local communities. Misunderstanding had started creeping into God's Church.

Some have thought God's people, and His ministers in particular, ought to start taking a more active part in local community activities. It was even urged by one who is no longer in God's Church that the Worldwide Church of God ministers ought to become active in local social and community affairs -- join various clubs, perhaps take a stand on political issues, become an integral part of the community.

But what does the Word of God say? What did Jesus teach?

Jesus said to those who formed the starting nucleus of God's Church -- the same church Christ has called us out of the world and baptized us into: "These things I command you, that ye love one another...if ye were of the world, the world would love his own..." (John 15:17, 19).

Let's face it! Is not the underlying motive in unthinkingly recommending that we -- and especially our ministers who are our local leaders -- begin fraternizing more with the local community -- taking more active part in community activities -- isn't this an unrealized desire to win the approval of the world which "loves its own"? But Jesus continued, "...but because ye are not of the world" (participating in its activities), "but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.... If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (verse 20).

Brethren, and fellow ministers, I know that God has called me out of the world. Jesus Christ committed to me His GREAT COMMISSION -- to GO FORTH as His Apostle, to the world with His message. Yet, though we must live in the world, Jesus said we are not to be of it -- participating in its activities!

And Jesus Christ made this a COMMAND! Do we want to break His COMMAND?

It is true that one of the qualifications of an elder (minister) is, "...he must have a good report of them which are without..." (of the world) (I Tim. 3:7). He must be "blameless" (verse 2). But that does not mean being a participant with the world in its affairs and its activities.

This I know: Jesus Christ commissioned me to go TO the world with His gospel, but not to be OF it!

We should all live blameless before the world -- let our light of Godly character so shine before the world, that they may see our

good works. But that does not mean to be of them.

The admonition, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ..." (II Cor. 6:14), applies not only to marriage or business partnerships, but in social or fraternal contacts as well. Notice the remainder of that same verse: "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" The passage continues on to say that we of the Church are the very TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD, to which Christ shall come, in His GLORY!

This same passage continues, referring to the worldly community in which we live, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord ..." (verse 17).

We are called into the FELLOWSHIP with Christ (I Cor. 1:9), and also of God the Father (I John 1:3).

Notice God's instruction to us, His Church, in Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...."

So, what is the sum of Christ's teaching to us in His Church? We of necessity must live in the world -- but must not be of it. We must let the world see our GOOD WORKS -- we must be friendly, courteous, polite -- yet not be a friend of the world. "...Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"! (James 4:4.)

God's COMMAND and instruction to us is DEFINITE! That is why I never (since conversion 51 years ago) have "joined" or affiliated with any of this world's activities. That is WHY, when I was sole leader, and God's Church was smaller, our ministers did not in any way participate, fraternize, or fellowship with the world in their local communities.

But when I say there has been a tendency to water down God's TRUTH in the Church -- to see just how close to this world, and to Satan's way, we can come and still "make it into God's Kingdom," this is one specific illustration of what I was talking about!

JESUS CHRIST is the HEAD of this Church. But I am His representative, and not Satan's representative! JESUS CHRIST is putting God back into His Church and College!

Listen to what Christ inspired Peter to say: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a PECULIAR PEOPLE...." (I Peter 2:9.) Notice -- a "PECULIAR people" -- UNIQUE -- DIFFERENT -- unlike those around us in our communities. We have been called out from them -- and yet one who was taking to himself authority never vested in him, was encouraging our ministers to go back into them -- be like them -- participate with them -- become the ENEMY OF GOD! This take-over of unauthorized authority had put inter-collegiate competition in the basketball courts of God's College.

One of the fruits of Satan's way, along with vanity, lust and greed, envy and jealousy, is COMPETITION -- rivalry -- "party spirit" as Moffatt translates it.

Once again, Christ through me, has put that competition with the world out of Ambassador College! And our Church basketball teams should NOT compete with the outside world!

There has been a TURN-AROUND in God's Church and College! To those ministers who have joined local activities or clubs, Christ commands, "Come out from among them and be ye separate"!

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Greetings Fellow Ministers:

Greetings again to the entire ministry worldwide. Thanks to all of you who have taken the time to write the many letters I have received over the past few months.

Your expressions of support for God's Work and its leader, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, and your love, your backing and your loyalty are very much appreciated by Mr. Armstrong, by myself and by all the rest of us who are involved in directing this Worldwide Work.

It has been my intention to keep up with my correspondence by personal replies to all of you who write. This way I had hoped we could keep communication at this personal level on a two-way street. I am sorry that keeping up with paperwork is such a continual "war" that this results in belated replies to many of you. But, we'll do our best to keep as current as possible.

In order to effectively respond to Mr. Armstrong's leadership of the Church, we here at headquarters are setting up systems enabling us to work together in a well coordinated way. In the first meeting held recently by the Executive Coordination Team for the purpose of discussing the entire subject of media as utilized by the Work, I was impressed how totally this Work is one Work. Every facet of it overlaps, and impinges on every other area. For example, it is impossible to effectively discuss the programs that disseminate the gospel to the general public without at some point discussing the ministerial role in the personal contact (prospective member visits) that is ultimately generated by the Work's media efforts.

The last Pastor's Report contained an article by Robert Kuhn outlining the objectives of these coordination meetings. We are including in this issue of the Report a summary of the first meeting.

We in Pastoral Administration have also begun a more effective means of coordinating the functions of the Church worldwide. We intend to have weekly meetings of the key personnel here at Pasadena representing all facets of the Church in order to discuss collectively all current activities, needs and problems. This team will provide me with the "multitude of counsel" that God tells us gives safety.

In no way are we the "policy-making" team. We are responsive to Mr. Armstrong's leadership and recognize him as the one who establishes policy and major procedural matters.

Our meetings will isolate particular problems, needs for clearer definition, recommended changes in procedure, etc. We will then submit

such needs to the Executive Coordination Team, and in turn to Mr. Armstrong for resolution as is proper and required.

There are several major areas of the ministry that particularly concern us at the present time. One large area is the need for much more specific and definitive understanding of the role of the ministry. One person said recently that he felt that if 10 people were asked to define the job of the local pastor you would get 10 different answers. This is probably so. It might even be that all 10 ideas put together would be one good definition. But, my point is that in recent years the concept of what the work of the local church pastor is has become somewhat confused. This is only one of the many areas we will be devoting attention to over the coming weeks.

I am very pleased to tell you that basically the Church is stable at the present time. The activities of Ted Armstrong are having very little effect on the Church. So far as we know, NO minister has thus far left the Church to join Ted. A small number of "members" have been attending meetings of the "Church of God International" in Tyler, Texas, but we have been informed by the ministry in and around Big Sandy that most of these people were of questionable loyalty to the Church anyway.

Our purpose is not to fight those who oppose us in doing this Work of God, but rather simply work all the harder in devoting ourselves to God's service. That, I hope, is what each of you is striving in every way to do in your local church pastorates.

One more item I want to cover in this Report concerns the Festival season now very soon to be upon us.

God has given us an understanding of the meaning of the Holy Days. The keeping of these annual "stop-signs," these reminders of God's plan that is being worked out here on earth, is one of the most important doctrinal understandings we have and is one of the signs that designates us as "people of God." Understanding the truth about the Holy Days is vital to our remaining close to God in the realization of His purpose for mankind.

Be sure that each of you preach moving, effective, powerful and meaningful sermons in advance of and in preparation for the fast approaching Festival season. Let's all of us do our part to prepare God's people for the most uplifting, most encouraging and most inspiring Feast of Tabernacles we've observed in this age.

We all need to draw closer to God in unity, in teamwork, in personally identifying with Christ as His "called-out" ones who have been made a part of this "body of Christ" to do the work of God in this critical time.

Fellow ministers, this is a good time for all of us to examine ourselves. If we are not motivated by an attitude of gratitude to God for revealing to us the "pearls of wisdom and truth," for making us a part of His Work and allowing us to serve in His ministry, then we surely cannot be effective in leading, inspiring and motivating others. Please take time in thought, prayer and study to be sure you have your priorities organized and your objectives well defined.

Know where you are going and always make your decisions based on the right reasons.

Once again, let's do our part very sincerely and effectively to ensure that God's people are thoroughly edified and uplifted by the coming Holy Days.

God be with all of you. Our prayers are with you.

With Love in Jesus' Name,



C. Wayne Cole

MINUTES OF MEDIA COORDINATION TEAM MEETING On Thursday, August 24, the first meeting of the Media Coordination Team was held. About 20 men, representing all the major areas of the Work, participated. All shared a real enthusiasm for both the concept and the initial execution of such cooperative and creative efforts dedicated to supporting Mr. Armstrong in doing God's Work. The minutes follow immediately.

--Robert Kuhn

Mr. Wayne Cole began by introducing the objectives and functions of the Media Team, stressing that our primary purpose was the analysis and coordination of information for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's consideration. Robert Kuhn added that the team would "recommend," and that Mr. Rader's close association with Mr. Armstrong will make the Work's efforts successful since we can now be sure that Mr. Armstrong will always be fully informed about, and in full control of, all activities.

The involvement of Church Administration, represented by Mr. Wayne Cole, Art Mocarow and Ted Herlofson, will greatly enhance the Team's capacity to integrate information across the entire spectrum of the Work's responsibilities. Now we can track, analyze and discuss the progress and patterns of people who respond to our message -- whether on T.V., radio, P.T. newsstands, etc. -- and follow them through their progressive involvement with our literature and up through initial Church contact and baptism.

The established general procedure calls for each meeting to open with brief "updates" on the major areas of the Work -- Church, Television-Radio, Editorial, Mail/Subscriber Service, Publishing, Media Analysis, etc. Then, after whatever introductory discussions are needed, will follow 1 or 2 detailed reports on specific areas of the Work.

Mr. Rader emphasized the opportunity we all have to work together as a team in supporting Mr. Armstrong to fulfill the Great Commission; that the department heads will be working together as a team; that the Financial area will work together with the various departments to determine and control budgets and activities; and that we have a

real opportunity for interaction and creativity in doing the Work. Mr. Rader was especially desirous of bringing and keeping Mr. Armstrong completely up to date with respect to our backlog of spot commercials, administrative procedures in each area, etc. He therefore requested all reports which must be written to be duplicated in larger type for Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Rader and Mr. Cornwall reviewed our relationship with our time-buying agency, emphasizing both the nature of the industry and our own control prerogatives and responsibilities in our continuing relationship with Ed Libov Associates.

Mr. Rice began an in-depth presentation of our current system in working with "new adds" to our file. He explained how the new system was designed in very close cooperation with Mr. Armstrong and would very markedly and dramatically put the "Worldwide Church of God" out front as well as reduce the average time for an individual to cycle through our system from three years to one year. It is obviously too early to determine the actual effectiveness of this program, but the general consensus was extremely favorable to the well-thought-out concepts and techniques to help bring people along. Requiring new subscribers to request all literature, including their P.T. subscription, results in a more realistic list, greater involvement and higher financial efficiency.

The desirability of increasing the number of people on our mailing list, at the most efficient cost of acquisition, was highlighted by two facts: 1) an almost constant percentage of subscribers who go on to become Donors, CoWorkers, and Members (10%, 1%, .1% respectively); 2) the need to galvanize the ministry into an effective, action-oriented force. However, as we move "upfront" in telling people about the Church, as Mr. Armstrong has directed, these percentages may change significantly.

An animated discussion of the current state of the ministry, led by Messrs. Cole, Mocarow and Herlofson, followed -- how prepared our men are for crisis counseling, how they can become better trained to meet the needs of the 1980s, how they can learn to become more professional ministers, and how we need to select and prepare men for the self-sacrificing life of dedication to the brethren which must be the hallmark of the true minister of God. The conclusion was unanimous that the ministry needs a sense of fulfillment!

The first meeting of the Media Team was enthusiastically appreciated by all, and the open discussions of many areas of the Work highlighted our great mutual opportunities for the future. Of particular importance was the necessity for continuing a close integration between all media departments and the Church.

The meeting concluded with the following assignments for future thought, presentation and discussion:

- 1) Data gathering and tracking. Analysis of procedures and efficiency ideas.
- 2) Criteria for acquisition efficiency analysis such as cost per response vs. cost per renewal vs. cost per donor, etc.
- 3) P.T. content to conform to Mr. H.W.A.'s directives and attentive to subscriber feedback.

- 4) Innovative T.V. productions.
- 5) Direct mail techniques learned from Quest/78 with applications for efficient subscriber acquisition for the P.T.
- 6) Booklet distribution in public places such as P.T. news-stands.
- 7) Fair Booths.
- 8) Human Potential Center as a vehicle for Church service to the brethren and the local congregations.
- 9) International Publishing Coordination.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE PRE-FEAST GOOD NEWS The last regular issue of The Good News to be printed before the Feast of Tabernacles this year is scheduled for September 25. We are now making plans for a special issue which will carry articles geared for members soon to hit the road for their chosen Festival site. If you have any copy you wish to include, please note that our deadline for our pre-Feast issue is September 18. Articles received after that date will not reach the readership of the paper until well after the Feast, if at all. The Good News will not publish during the Feast, but will resume normal bi-weekly (every two weeks) publication beginning November 6. (The deadline for the November 6 issue is October 30.)

--Dexter Faulkner, Good News

A LOOK AT THE NEW ROMAN PONTIFF With a speed that surprised even Vatican "insiders," the secret conclave of cardinals elected Cardinal Albino Luciani, 65, as 263rd Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church last Saturday during the first day's balloting in the historic Sistine Chapel.

Although Cardinal Luciani had been mentioned as being among the late Pope Paul's possible successors, he was believed to have been originally far down on the list of papabili. He himself joked to an American newsman before the conclave that he was on "List C." What is obvious now however, is that as the days dwindled down toward the election, Cardinal Luciani emerged from inner-circle caucusing as an acceptable compromise candidate who could be supported by nearly all ideological factions, and by both Italian and non-Italian electors.

Cardinal Luciani chose "John Paul I" as his papal name, making him the first pope to ever assume a double name. It is believed that he chose the names of his two predecessors -- John XXIII and Paul VI -- both as a tribute to them as well as to indicate that he would continue the general lines of their moderate reformist policies, avoiding any sharp change of direction in the church.

The new pope is considered to be a moderate-conservative in his theological outlook, having been a protégé, for a time, of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, now 87, the Vatican's No. 1 conservative. There would thus appear to be little indication of his relaxing traditional church teachings on morality, specifically in the areas of divorce

and birth control, or those on priestly celibacy and a strictly male priesthood -- issues which have caused wide dissent in the church in recent years. (Pope John Paul, as a prelate, sat on a commission called by Paul to consider if any artificial methods of contraception could be acceptable to the Roman Catholic church and sided with the majority that said the pill could be permitted. After Paul ignored the advice of his own commission and banned the pill and every other means of artificial contraception in the encyclical "humanae vitae," the present pope remained silent on the subject from that time onward.)

Cardinal Luciani is a native of the scenic Dolomite Mountains village of Forno di Canale in the Veneto region of northeast Italy. His father, a glass blower and bricklayer, was an Italian socialist, which probably accounts for Luciani's progressive social views. Ordained as a priest in 1935 at age 22, Luciani rose through the ranks, eventually being named Patriarch (Bishop) of Venice by Pope Paul VI in 1969. In 1973 Pope Paul ordained him a cardinal. Not much is known yet of the state of his health, though one U.S. television network described him as being somewhat "frail," having had health problems as a youth.

Customarily described as a quiet and simple man, yet very intelligent, John Paul has been involved mostly in pastoral work in the parishes and dioceses rather than in the Vatican bureaucracy (he was not a member of the Curia).

Though generally considered to be a "pastoral" rather than a "political" pope (he also eschews the labels "conservative" and "liberal"), John Paul I is recognized as being an ardent anti-Communist. He has published articles in times past in the Vatican daily L'Osservatore Romano, opposing any accommodation whatsoever by the Church with Marxism. In 1975 he recommended disciplinary punishment for priests who spoke out in favor of the Communist Party or other leftist groups.

Cardinal Luciani once admitted to a reporter that he found it difficult to accept the Vatican Council's teaching that all religions are entitled to full and equal liberty. This he felt was in conflict with the traditional teaching that Roman Catholicism is the "only true religion," which confers upon it rights that others do not have. It was his former mentor, Cardinal Ottaviani, who had developed the thesis that "only truth has rights." Cardinal Luciani, however, subsequently claimed to have become convinced of "his error" on this point. The fact that he has backed away from his previous hard-line stand regarding other churches and beliefs has led some observers to speculate that John Paul will perpetuate the Vatican Council's relative openness toward the non-Catholic and non-Christian world.

All in all, it would seem at this point in time that no dramatic changes or innovations lay in store for the Roman Catholic Church during Pope John Paul's papacy. But as has been frequently observed in history, the papal office often "creates the man," or brings out unexpected qualities in him. Thus, until Pope John Paul actually begins to function in his office, we can only speculate. However, judging on the basis of his career and personality, it will probably be necessary to look for another to step into the "False Prophet" role depicted in prophecy.

For your interest (or for whatever else it may be worth), an old Irish Catholic prophecy of the 12th Century predicts that there will be 265 popes before "the end of the world." Pope John Paul I is number 263. The last pope, according to this prophecy of "Malachy," an old Irish bishop, is to take the name "Peter the Roman." Time will have to judge the prophecy's accuracy.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau