

# PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE  
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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## CHURCH N O T FIGHTING STATE

Let's make it plain once for all that God's  
Church is NOT fighting the STATE.

by Herbert W. Armstrong

NOTICE NOW God's Scriptural teaching to His Church in regard to whether the Church should have "caved in" (to use an expression of the lawsuit-granting judge) to allow the State illegally to take over all Church properties in California, and to manage and operate GOD'S Church.

I have printed before the truth about Romans 13 and allied passages. But God's Church emphatically DID ACT according to God's own Biblical teaching. And the full facts FROM THE BIBLE about that have never yet been printed. I give them to you now.

First, remember this: Neither God's Church nor its leaders have broken any LAW OF THE STATE. The State has no evidence of any such unlawful acts. There were false allegations made by dissenters and former members, unsupported by any facts or evidence whatsoever.

Neither myself, Mr. Rader, nor the Church had broken any law. WE WERE NOT CHARGED WITH BREAKING ANY LAW!

It was a civil action lawsuit. UNLAWFULLY the Deputy Attorney General induced a judge in the privacy of his chambers, to appoint a Receiver --a personal friend and ex-judge--to TAKE OVER possession of Church property and the management of Church operations, without even the legally-required notice.

Now notice what we have not mentioned to you before--the BIBLICAL EXAMPLES AND TEACHING!

A demon-possessed woman was pestering Paul and Silas at Philippi. Paul cast out the demon. The woman's masters, finding their means of profit gone, induced the magistrates to beat Paul and Silas with many stripes and put them in prison.

Paul and Silas were two individuals, but the legal action was taken because of their religion--actually against the Church! Paul and Silas were seized forcibly and unable themselves to resist. BUT, IN PRISON, GOD DID THE RESISTING AGAINST THIS FALSE ARREST!

Suddenly, at midnight, there was a great earthquake. Immediately all the doors of the prison were opened, and the iron bands binding Paul's and Silas' feet were loosed. This awakened the prison keeper. Paul spoke to him, he was converted, and Paul baptized him.

Next morning, the magistrates sent word saying to the prison keeper, "Let those men go... But Paul said unto them, 'They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.'"

Paul, when he had a chance, did not "cave in." He demanded his rights from these government officials--after GOD by a miracle had loosed them in prison.

It was GOD'S WILL that HIS CHURCH be DEFENDED AGAINST false attacks by the STATE! God Himself supernaturally interposed in this defense against unjust and illegal State action. GOD'S MINISTERS and CHURCH WERE NOT FIGHTING against or harming the State--merely DEFENDING CHURCH PROGRESS! It's the same today.

The above from Acts 16.

In Acts 17, Paul went to Thessalonica, and as Paul's manner was, he went into a synagogue and three Sabbath days reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures (O.T.). Paul was staying at the house of one Jason. Some of the Jews believed and followed Paul. But the others were angry, and sought out some of the lower and more violent people. They assaulted Jason's home but did not find Paul. Then these angry Jews went to the CIVIL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES with false charges against Paul and Silas.

Here is another case. Did Paul "cave in" and allow the CIVIL GOVERNMENT to STOP THE WORK OF GOD'S CHURCH? NEVER! Verse 10--the brethren secretly sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea.

GOD WILLS THAT THE WORK OF HIS CHURCH GO ON, NEVER STOPPED BY THE CIVIL STATE!

When the angry, Church-opposing Jews at Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching at Berea, they themselves went to Berea to stir up the people and the civil government to stop the Work of God. But Paul already had reaped a harvest at Berea. So he left Silas and Timothy there while he went on to Athens, then sending word for Silas and Timothy to join him.

Satan was to continually use the civil government powers to oppose God's Church. Paul had dwelt in Corinth a year and a half. Then when one Gallio was the Deputy of Achaia [Acts 18:12], the opposing Jews had Paul brought to Court. But here was one judge that refused to judge the CHURCH, unless its chief Apostle had violated a law. But the unbelieving Jews took Sosthenes, chief ruler of the synagogue WHO BELIEVED, and beat him in Court.

Later, at Jerusalem, unbelieving Jews raised a tumult against Paul. Finally he was seized by Roman officers and soldiers, and taken to the palace [Acts 21:37]. Paul begged the chief officer to allow him to speak to the people. Speaking in Hebrew, Paul said, "Men, brethren and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you."

Paul DID NOT FIGHT AGAINST the Roman government, nor against the Jewish people. But he DID DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST FALSE CHARGES! And

that is precisely what God's Church is doing today. We are NOT fighting against the State of California. We are DEFENDING God's Church, God's Work, and God's ministers--not attacking or fighting against the State.

Now continue the Apostle Paul's experience being attacked by disbelieving Jews and Roman Government authorities:

The unbelieving Jews listened a while, then set up a loud tumult, shouting, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." The chief Roman captains ordered Paul brought into the castle, and bound with thongs [Acts 22:22-25].

They were preparing to beat him with stripes. Instead of so meekly SUBMITTING as enemies of God's Work today think the Church ought to do, Paul said to the Centurian standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" [verse 25.] The State of California was trying to TAKE POSSESSION of Church property, and Church management--firing Christ's chosen Apostle and the Treasurer, and appointing Wayne Cole (whom we know now was in on the conspiracy several weeks before January 3, 1979) as Chief Officer of the Church under the Receiver. We DEFENDED the Church and its property, as PAUL DEFENDED HIMSELF WHEN FALSELY ACCUSED! Continue:

Next morning, they allowed Paul to face his accusers. Now Acts 23. Paul now used strategy to divide his accusers, DEFENDING himself and the WORK OF GOD. Some of the Jews were Pharisees, some Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, but Pharisees did. Paul cried out, in this Roman Court, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" [verse 6].

Immediately this stirred a dissention between the Sadducees and Pharisees, and Paul's accusers WERE DIVIDED! Incidentally, OUR accusers in this civil lawsuit today are now pretty well divided among themselves! Men filled with malice, resentment and bitterness do not make good bedfellows!

The Pharisees then cried out that they found no evil in Paul. The chief Roman Captain, fearing for Paul's safety in the fight between Pharisees and Sadducees, commanded the Roman soldiers to take Paul from these fighting Jews and take him to the castle. That night Christ spoke to Paul to be of good cheer--there was much more for him to do. Paul learned of a conspiracy of Jews to kill him the next day. Paul got word to the Chief Captain [verses 16-17].

Then the Chief Captain of the Roman army called two centurians (over 200 soldiers) and 200 spearmen and horses, and by night Paul was sped to Felix, the Roman Governor. Governor Felix insisted Paul face his accusers, who were commanded to come to Caesarea.

Now Acts 24. After five days Ananias the high priest and Jewish elders appeared before Felix, Paul facing them. They accused Paul of sedition against Rome, plainly showing that Paul was preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Felix delayed judgment. Our courts today give us delay after delay. Paul was delayed there two years. Then one Festus was sent to take over the Governorship.

Now Acts 25. The Jews came down from Jerusalem to accuse Paul, standing before Festus. They accused him of many things, just as our former resentful members have accused us--BUT COULD PROVE NOTHING--as neither can our accusers!

But the politician Festus was willing to do the Jews a favor, and suggested Paul go to Jerusalem to be tried. Then said Paul: "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat where I ought to be judged" [verse 10]. Paul DEFENDED HIMSELF. Some of our former members would say Paul was surely wrong. Then Paul APPEALED TO CAESAR, just as we today are appealing to the Supreme Court, and by prayers to the Supreme Court of Heaven where Jesus Christ sits with the Father on the Throne!

The Apostle Paul did not fight against the Jews at Jerusalem, nor against Caesar's Government. We today do not fight against, to harm, our false accusers, and we do not fight against the State of California.

Was Paul wrong?

Are we wrong, following the same identical procedures?

Romans 13 I have gone into a number of times. That is referring to any citizen of a country being subject, as an individual, to the law of man. In that respect we are all SUBJECT in the same way. But this is NOT a CHARGE of law violation against an individual. It is an attack to TAKE OVER, CONFISCATE ALL PROPERTY, AND RULE GOD'S CHURCH, on no evidence. This is a horse of an altogether different color!

The High Court of Heaven will give us the victory. Meanwhile GOD'S WORK GOES ON STRONGER THAN EVER!

We expected persecution. Satan has thrown at us his "trump card" this time. Jesus Christ has never, and will never, forsake us!

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### THE BIG NEWS RIGHT NOW

by Herbert W. Armstrong

The BIG NEWS in world "progress" backward toward the GREAT TRIBULATION and ARMAGEDDON is what's going on secretly between heads of European nations and the Vatican--and what's going on with equal secrecy between Leonid Brezhnev and other Kremlin leaders.

Important news is happening right now--but the newspapers and TV news are not getting it.

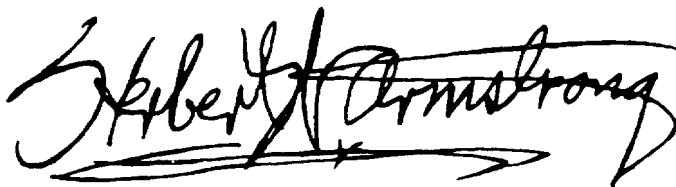
Meanwhile sports-minded people in the U.S.A. are recovering from watching the Winter Olympic Games on ABC-TV and the winners being embraced by President Carter at the White House. And, of course, politically-minded America is awaiting breathlessly the results of the first Presidential Primary in the small-population state of New Hampshire. TV news this evening [Feb.25] is showing political candidates in New Hampshire showing off their best smiles (smiles won the election for President Carter) and the usual kissing of babies.

But the already-elected King of the whole world, Jesus Christ, does not have to campaign in that fashion.

The winning of five gold medals might teach some of us a lesson in perseverance and determination. Eric Heiden did not really win those five skating records at the Olympic Games. He won them by long, continuous weeks and months of grueling training, even with special machines to develop leg muscles. That arduous training put him in better condition and with stronger muscles where skating requires them than his Russian or East German or Swedish competitors. He simply had what it takes. It might be a lesson in some of the laws of success. It required patience, steadfastness, determined endurance--the same as our battle against ourselves and the devil in overcoming.

But be sure important NEWS has happened during this past week, even if not exposed to the public as yet.

President Tito seems to be living on--no news the past days about his supposedly imminent death. Maybe he's outliving those who proclaimed him dead or dying, just as I am. Incidentally, although during this flu epidemic I've had a sore throat and head cold, it has never been serious and is about gone. Regardless, don't stop praying for me, please.



#### ATTORNEY GENERAL THWARTED IN ATTEMPT TO HAVE CHURCH HELD IN CONTEMPT

Monday, February 25th, Church attorneys appeared in L.A. Superior Court to hold off the strivings of the California Attorney General. Deputy A. G. Lauren Brainard urged Superior Court Judge Weil to hold the Church and its officers in contempt of court. Brainard was not happy with the results of Mr. Rader's court-ordered deposition, nor with the other legal measures the Church had undertaken to protect its rights.

Judge Weil refused to hold the Church or its officers in contempt. The Judge said that he could see no willful refusal to obey any court order. He felt that the Church was acting properly to protect itself in light of the fact that it was awaiting higher court rulings on several of these issues. He perceived accurately that much was at stake if the Church were to neglect its rights.

Judge Weil also granted a stay for thirty days of all discovery by the State, pending decisions by the California Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court on different matters before them. Although this ruling does help the Church and we can be glad that Judge Weil showed some sensitivity to the enormously important issues in the case, nevertheless the legal matters continue to be a day-by-day struggle. The unrelenting prayers of all the ministry and the local brethren are still vital in staying the hands of those who would attempt to disrupt and destroy the Church and Work of God Almighty!

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICESMr. Rader Speaks to Brethren in Pittsburgh

On the Sabbath of February 23, 1980, special services were held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for brethren to hear Mr. Stanley Rader speak and to view the documentary, "Church Versus State." In spite of a flu epidemic, 1,700 brethren from eight different Church areas were in attendance at the Soldier's and Sailor's Memorial Hall.

After services were opened with prayer the documentary was viewed by the brethren, at the conclusion of which their appreciation was shown by enthusiastic applause. Mr. Don Lawson, pastor of the Pittsburgh churches, then introduced Mr. Rader who was greeted with a long round of applause.

Mr. Rader began by acknowledging and thanking the brethren from Pittsburgh, as well as the brethren from all the other areas, for standing behind the Work of God during this trying period. Then he went on to further describe his relationship with Mr. Armstrong and detailed the rigorous schedule Mr. Armstrong maintains, working relentlessly hour after hour writing and meeting with department heads, guiding this multi-faceted Work of God. Mr. Rader also spoke of Mr. Armstrong's upcoming trip to Moscow in May of 1980.

Mr. Rader then covered additional information about occurrences prior to January 3, 1979 which were not included in the one-hour film. This helped the brethren to better understand the documentary, undoubtedly answering many questions they may have had.

The brethren were encouraged to remain faithful no matter what persecution the future may hold. Quoting from Psalm 2, Mr. Rader linked the happenings at this time to those described in the Psalm: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed; saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

This, he said, is speaking of persecution against God's Church. But, continuing in verses 4 and 5, he said if we remain faithful and trust God, "God will laugh at them and have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." In the end God will give His Church the victory.

After services that evening, Mr. Rader hosted a dinner for the ministers and their wives from the church areas represented at services. He spoke and then answered all questions for two hours. The evening was enjoyed very much by all. Mr. Lawson stated this was a shot in the arm for the area and hoped other areas would have the same opportunities.

News From the Work in Canada

The new year has started on a very positive note. The income for January was 19% ahead of January 1979 and the total monthly mail received shows a 181.5% increase over January of last year. This is due largely to the massive response to the Homemakers ad campaign. The one double-page ad with pop-up coupon offering "Dilemma of Drugs," "Managing Your Personal Finances" and "Principles of Healthful Living" has brought in over 20,000 responses to date. Our estimate of 4500 responses based on previous show-

ings and a hoped for cost per response of \$10.00 has been smashed completely! Cost per response is presently just over \$2.00 and responses are still coming in. We could very well hit a 2% response based on Homemakers' 1.2 million circulation.

The PLAIN TRUTH newspaper flyer campaign is beginning to take hold now, with around 10,000 responses already received. These responses will be entered for a 12-month subscription. A total of just over 6 million inserts in English, French, and German will be placed before the end of February. The German language insert has currently realized a 5% return (over 2,000 Klar und Wahr subscriptions) and responses are still coming in. This is a very high return compared with the English insert which has brought a very acceptable 1 to 1 1/2% in various test campaigns. It remains to be seen how well the French insert will produce.

The following are current Church and media statistics:

Members	5,670
Co-workers	8,779
Donors	3,874
PLAIN TRUTH Circulation	69,228 (English)
Pure Verite Circulation	27,472 (French)
Good News Circulation	9,596

### Caribbean Update

1979 closed with a record-smashing December. More letters were received than in any previous month in the history of the Work in the Caribbean--about 19% higher than the previous record set in May of '78. The significant high mail count was due to the many responses from our PLAIN TRUTH readers requesting Mr. Armstrong's book, TOMORROW...WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE. So far we have received requests for 500 copies.

Our income for December showed once again an increase over the previous month by more than 30%. Total income for the year was 31% higher than 1978. The income, however, is not always available in the area where it is needed and there is very little interchange of funds due to currency restrictions.

Church growth for 1979 in the Caribbean was very encouraging. Overall attendance picked up by 10% during the year. Local Bible studies have also increased in attendance as much as 26%. During 1979 a total of 66 persons were baptized.

### Report From Jamaica

On Sunday, December 16, the first Plain Truth Lecture ever held on the north coast of Jamaica took place at the Bay Roc Hotel, just east of Montego Bay. It was the first in a series of lectures planned for the island. Emcee was Charles Fleming, associate pastor of the Kingston congregation, who introduced the main speaker, Kingsley Mather, pastor of the Nassau, Bahamas and Kingston, Jamaica congregations. Mr. Mather discussed Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's recent activities, stressing the China trip and also dealing extensively with world events in the light of Bible prophecy.

Invitations were sent to all in the area who have been receiving The PLAIN TRUTH magazine for the last year. Of the 665 persons invited, six showed up and four members of the hotel staff also requested literature.

While numerically small, the six who attended demonstrated a degree of interest in the lecture that was most encouraging. One lady, after getting a ride for the first 12 miles of her journey to the hotel, found she had to walk the last three miles. She got lost and just as she was about to give up, learned that she was less than 200 yards from her destination. Another person got lost traveling away from the hotel, but realizing he was late, ran for over a mile. In addition, all those who attended expressed a desire to attend any further meeting the Church may have in the area.

Since the lecture, several persons expressed regret that their invitations did not arrive on time. It seems that a combination of the Christmas pressure on the postal service along with the fact that many of our readers collect their mail from postal agencies and offices only once or twice a week, meant that a number of persons did not hear about the lecture until it was too late to attend. Another contributing factor was a bus strike in the Montego Bay area.

Over 300 members of the Kingston congregation had driven up to Montego Bay to give their enthusiastic support and to extend a typically warm Worldwide Church of God welcome to our guests.

A follow-up lecture will be planned in approximately two months time hoping to reach many more of those God is dealing with in the Montego Bay area.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

TO ALL CHURCH PASTORS

Please announce in your church areas the URGENT NEED for a nice lady to live in the home with a fellow minister and his wife to help care for his wife who is partially bedridden due to an auto accident and is a hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) sufferer. FREE ROOM AND BOARD (no rent, utilities or grocery expenses) and in addition a small salary will be provided for services rendered.

Please reply to P.O. Box 2550, Montgomery, Ala. 36105 or call (205) 264-4604.

--Jack C. Sheppard, Minister  
Montgomery, Alabama

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Many of you will remember that we sold our big web printing presses in 1975. Since then the vast majority of our printing has been done by commercial printers. In fact, we deal with about 25 different printers worldwide (not including our own Ambassador Press in England which is still going strong).



Most of the work that we send out to commercial printing comes under the heading of General Publications; i.e. The PLAIN TRUTH, Good News, Quest, Books, Booklets, etc. But some will be surprised to learn that we still do print in house most of our own non-publications material such as co-worker letters, reprint articles, promotional material, forms, cards, stationery, etc. This amounts to millions of items per year which are still totally produced by the publishing area in our Multi-print Department. However, the small printing presses that we have used for years to do this work are vastly overworked and are hard-pressed to keep up with the ever-increasing load.

We are very pleased to say that we are now waiting delivery of a new small Heidelberg perfecting press, as well as a folder and collating machine which will enable us to speed up our turn around on small jobs in this multi-print area.

We did an extensive study of the various options open to us with regard to the new press, and have found that we can get a pay-back period on the cost of the machine in less than two years. This is obviously a very good investment and we're looking forward to improved efficiency and service.

#### MAIL COMMENTS

The January issue of The GOOD NEWS and the Ambassador College Correspondence Course are featured in this week's report. The January GOOD NEWS carried a number of enlightening articles on Christian living that inspired many comments. The Correspondence Course continues to be one of our most effective and viable tools.

--Mail Processing Center

#### January Good News Draws Enthusiastic Comments

I just completed reading all the articles of the January issue of The GOOD NEWS magazine. The Special you ran on Bible study was very inspirational and helpful.

I would also like to thank you and your staff for your continuous effort in helping us to stay in tune with God's Word. The GOOD NEWS has provided us a tool to help supplement the Bible. I completed all the "mini-studies" for 1979 and really enjoyed them. I also enjoyed studying "Prove All Things,..." especially the ones about the Sabbath and unclean or common meats.

--Mrs. Enola R. Foust (Princeton, WV)

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the special section in the January issue of The GOOD NEWS. We have never been more in need of articles to show us how to get closer to God than now.

To Scott Ashley, I would like to say thanks for last month's article and also many of the beautiful photographs I have been seeing in various issues.

Thank you all again for the helpful issue. May God bless all of you and inspire you with many more much needed articles such as these were.

--Jeri Holcomb (Boaz, AL)

I wanted to say to you that The GOOD NEWS, January issue, is one of the most spiritually-packed issues I've ever read. After hearing our local minister go over the article by Mr. Armstrong entitled, "The Time Has Come for Fasting and Prayer," I felt an urgent need to do just that. Applying the principles in The GOOD NEWS should motivate us to plod on with our part in this great work. Spiritual food is truly sweeter than physical food.

--Judy Cook (MS)

I just want to say I think The GOOD NEWS for January 1980 is one of the best I have ever read. I thank you for renewing my mind on how to study and why I need to study.

--Nancy Gaskins (Columbus, GA)

This month's GOOD NEWS [January] is truly FABULOUS. Mr. Armstrong's personal was very sobering, and should be read and read again to firmly plant in our minds that there is but a short time. And the article on fasting and prayer gave me very valuable instruction in getting closer to our God.

--Loren H. Westcott (Jasper, AR)

I just finished Mr. Scott Ashley's article, "A Timeless Message to Teenagers" and was greatly uplifted. The article held much to offer me but I was most inspired by the incredible challenge held out to teens. Those teens with the guts to accept the challenge offered in this article will someday be kings ruling over nations.

Also, I wanted to show my appreciation to Norman Shoaf for his article "Are You Guilty?" The article was clear-cut, right down the line. It showed me where I was "not guilty" and inspired me to want to change. Thank Norm.

There's so much to be thankful for in The GOOD NEWS, but I just wanted to thank these people while their articles were fresh on my mind.

--Dan Krupp (Fullerton, CA)

#### Students Take Lessons From Correspondence Course

The lessons are really comprehensive, in-depth and so clearly interpreted that I have an unquenchable thirst to know more. "Amazing" is the only word I can think of at this time.

Because of the very important knowledge you have revealed to me, my own life has changed greatly; in obeying God, in growing an attitude with right thoughts and deeds. I want to do my very best to live by every word of God.

--Mrs. J. B. Starnes (Indian Trail, NC)

I want to write this letter to show you my grateful thanks for the astonishing, eye-opening, plain truths revealed by the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. The truths are so clear that they make me reject some of the doctrines which I have learned from the other churches, and now I hope that I'm able to take heed not to believe in the false teachings! I certainly believe that I'm on the right track. These are probably the best prepared Biblical courses on this earth and you make them so attractive that I can't stay away from them.

--Nathan Crowe (Eau Claire, WI)

I'm glad to inform you that I received lesson number 9 this month. I like it very much. I'm making progress slow but sure and enjoying the course very much, but regret that I didn't get started sooner in my lifetime by waiting until in my '80s to get a good Biblical knowledge.

--C. R. Kehres (Richland, WA)

I am so glad for the course as I was searching for the real truth of God's Word. I went to different churches but there were questions unanswered, so I realized I wanted to know the truth.

I must say the course is what I needed. I have to date finished three lessons and they are so interesting and I feel I am learning the truth at last. I never dreamed of there being any study that could be so interesting.

--Virginia I. Wolfe (Morgantown, WV)

All of these years now I have walked in the belief that since I had read the Bible (as a child), went to church (sometimes), didn't stir up too much fuss--I had done all the things a "good" Christian does. What a fool I have been. I read--but did not understand--I believed--but knew not why.

Since starting the Bible Correspondence Course my eyes and my mind are beginning to open--here it was--in plain view--mine for the taking.

--D. E. Voss (East Riverdale, MD)

Since I've been studying the Correspondence Course my life has been totally different. My understanding of God's Word is plainer and simpler than it's ever been.

--Agnew E. Anderson (Jacksonville, FL)

#### ON THE WORLD SCENE

AFGHANISTAN--TURNING POINT IN PROPHECY? The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, begun in the last days of the decade of the '70s, could turn out to be the critical catalyst for major prophesied events to unfold in the '80s.

At first, Soviet armed might looked invincible against the rag-tag, vastly outgunned Afghan rebels. But it is now apparent that Moscow misjudged the dogged spirit of the Afghan people. In the last few days civil strife has erupted even in urban areas supposedly subject to Soviet control. The Afghan army is proving to be unreliable, with thousands of desertions. And in the hills the rebels fight on, motivated by the spirit of a  Jihad . "If they die in battle, there is an honor," says an expert in Islam. "If they live they keep on fighting."

Moscow is learning there are  differences in people. The Hungarians fought ferociously in 1956, whereas the Czechs succumbed rather meekly in 1968. The Soviets are convinced the Yugoslavs would battle them every inch of the way just as Tito's partisans did against the Nazis in World War II. The Kremlin should have known that the Afghans throughout history have been willing to take on all invaders.

The biggest fighting in Afghanistan may now have to wait until the spring thaws. The rebels vow to open 100 fronts then, although since they are still divided by factional infighting, they may not be able to make that boast hold up. Still, they are getting increased aid from other Moslem states. Egypt is training some of their commanders. Even the CIA is spiriting in some Eastern Bloc weapons.

The upshot of all this is: The Soviets--unless they can pull out under a face-saving arrangement--could soon be "up to their eyelids" in an unending conflict. Intelligence experts predict that, before long, they will have 200,000 troops in Afghanistan (they have 70,000 now). Some American observers--no doubt hoping that Russia has stumbled into her own "Vietnam"--postulate that the Soviets will have to eventually pour in 400,000 troops to quell the revolt--an army comparable to the U.S. military force that was sent to South East Asia.

Thus the cost to Moscow of staying in Afghanistan is rising rapidly. Yet, barring some sort of settlement, the cost of leaving would be even greater--the collapse of the puppet Karmal regime. As the Los Angeles Times reported on February 25, 1980: "If the Kremlin was seen to allow a socialist regime to collapse, it could also have enormous implications in Eastern Europe. The leadership would undoubtedly fear that such a failure would only encourage dangerous moves among its satellites to establish a more independent course from Moscow."

Russia's potential "sinkhole" in Afghanistan just could be the string that unravels her East Europe empire!

Yugoslavia is on the threshold of its long-expected "post-Tito" era. At first, Yugoslav leaders viewed the Afghanistan invasion with deep anxiety. Was this a forerunner of what could be expected in their nation? But now, with the Soviets being sucked in deeper and deeper in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia might have more room to maneuver, especially in strengthening its ties to Western Europe. (The Common Market, in a show of support, has made a political decision to rush to completion a new trade pact with Belgrade that had been deadlocked for two years.)

And then there is the rest of Eastern Europe. What if Catholics (and eventually Orthodox), taking advantage of the Soviet dilemma, rose up in a united revolt against Moscow? What could the Soviets, mired down in Afghanistan, do? The potential is certainly there; witness Pope John Paul II's electrifying visit to Poland last year, his open defiance of Communist authorities and his call for the "spiritual unity of Europe."

It's possible that the very likelihood of such a far more serious crisis erupting throughout her satellite empire is the reason for tenuous Soviet olive branches in the past few days. President Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromjki have both been hinting of willingness to pull out of Afghanistan in return for the West's helping guarantee Afghanistan's neutrality and seeing to the installation of a regime "not hostile" to Soviet interests. The softer Moscow line developed after the Common Market, on February 19, called for Afghanistan to be neutralized under international guarantees.

Such a guarantee would certainly let the Soviets off the hook now. The West seems all too willing, in the cause of world peace, to let Moscow squirm away free. The Moslem world, however, may not prove to be so cooperative.

The next few months should show us whether the Afghanistan crisis will be defused or whether the Russian quagmire will become muddier yet, with far-reaching impact upon Europe.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau