

RADIO CHURCH OF GOD  
WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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Dear Brethren of GOD'S Church:

Are we going to have to LOSE our fine new Tabernacle near Gladewater, Texas, after all?

Another \$18,000 payment was due today. Thank God we were able to mail the check day before yesterday, so it would arrive on time -- BUT THE SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR THIS TABERNACLE FUND HAVE BEEN DROPPING DOWN SINCE THE FESTIVAL -- and if this keeps up we may not be able to make the next payment!

I returned just a few days ago from the final inspection trip, with our architect, at the Tabernacle. It is now completely finished -- although some of the finish work was not satisfactory, and will have to be done over by the sub-contractors before we give it final approval. As soon as this is done, we have to give the Behlen Manufacturing Company, Columbus, Nebraska, the builders and contractors, a mortgage on the property on which the Tabernacle stands. If we do not continue to meet the payments, we will lose this fine building, after all!

It is a beautiful building, with all the rest-rooms and conference rooms completely finished! But, as I wrote you last month, we have outgrown it the very first year.

It will not be big enough to hold the expected crowd for the next Festival. The architect and I flew on to Columbus, Nebraska, to spend a full day in conference with Behlen officials and engineers, planning to enlarge the Tabernacle before next fall. They are willing to go ahead with the addition, making it half again larger than at present, by late spring so it will be ready for next fall -- provided our payments continue to be met promptly -- as they have been so far -- until that time.

The present Tabernacle is scheduled to be completely paid out by next July. If we are able to continue paying every \$18,000 installment promptly on time each month, the work will start on the big new addition about May. If not, we may LOSE even what we have! But if we keep it up, we can continue paying for the 50% addition on this same monthly basis. It is a very great blessing to be able to finance it this way, and we simply MUST put our shoulders to the wheel, and continue these SPECIAL offerings -- IN ADDITION to regular tithes and offerings for the Gospel work.

Now I have been doing some figuring. Even this big new addition, seating an additional 2,500 people, will probably be outgrown after two years, and certainly by three. I began looking into the future -- the next ten or twelve years -- and the outlook is almost STARTLING! As we have been planning this Tabernacle, I find it is possible that we could completely outgrow the whole structure in FIVE MORE YEARS, after enlarging it to the very limit, where we could go no farther!

I think you will be really interested in what I found, by looking into future possibilities -- so I am going to give you the astonishing FACTS. We had planned this building so that, after outgrowing the structure as we plan to enlarge it for next fall -- when it will be 121 feet deep as it is now, from pulpit to rear and 376 feet wide (the long way) -- we could then add the stem of a "T" on the middle of the rear (121 feet wide, and extending about 100 or 150 feet farther on back from the platform), and then finally we could put in a balcony. As nearly as we can figure now, this could possibly seat as many as 14,000 or 15,000 people.

But when I began figuring attendance for the past 14 years, and the rate of increase, it began to appear that WE MIGHT OUTGROW EVEN THAT IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS!

I think you will be interested in the approximate attendance figures. Starting with 1945, we were holding the Festival at Belknap Springs in the Cascade mountains in Oregon. At that time the broadcast was just starting to go national on an

every-night basis. All the members who attended, up to that time, came from Oregon and Washington, where we had been on the air since 1934, and where I had been continually holding personal evangelistic campaigns. But only a handful of people came for the entire eight days of the Feast -- about 40, with perhaps 20 or 30 additional on the weekly or annual Sabbaths.

In 1946, attendance was about 50, or a 25% increase. Following are attendance figures and percentages of increase for each year since:

1947 - attendance 65 -- 30% increase

1948 - " 75 -- 15% "

1949 - " 90 -- 20% "

1950 - " 110 -- 22% "

1951 - " 150 -- 36% "

By this time the Church in Pasadena was growing, and a few brethren from the Middle West were attending. We had now completely outgrown Belknap Springs. In 1952 the Festival was held at Seigler Springs. in California. There was a 200% increase, with 450 in attendance -- a large increase from the Middle West. God showed us by many unusual circumstances that the PLACE for the Festival, which HE chose to place His name there, was now the present Tabernacle grounds where we had built a small Tabernacle for the Passover Festival. It should be held in a warm climate or the SOUTHERN part of the United States, and Gladewater is about half way from coast to coast. That fall we began to enlarge the original Tabernacle, and another big increase appeared in attendance with about 750 there most of the time, and more for the Sabbath days. This was a 67% increase. Now that a NATIONAL membership was attending, a gradual and steady increase continued.

1954 - attendance 1050 -- 40% increase

1955 - " 1500 -- 43% "

1956 - " 2100 -- 40% "

1957 - " 2750 -- 31% "

1958 - " 4000 -- 45% "

Since the first year at the present location, the yearly increase has averaged 40% a year over the year before.

Now, suppose we continue to AVERAGE 30% a year increase, which is less than the average has been for 14 years. The average increase for 14 years has been 47%. Even this very year there was a 45% increase. Many of our members think it will CONTINUE to increase by not less than 30% a year.

IF THAT HAPPENS, just look at the astounding result: By year after next -- just two years in the ENLARGED Tabernacle, which will seat 7,000, we would have 6,750 in attendance. We would have to enlarge the Tabernacle again for the next Feast in 1961, when we would have 8,800 attending. The year after that, 1962, attendance would be 11,400.

Then, in 1963, there would be 14,800

" 1964, " " " 19,200

" 1965, " " " 25,000

" 1966, " " " 32,500

" 1967, " " " 42,250

" 1968, " " " 55,000

" 1969, " " " 71,500

" 1970, " " " 93,000

" 1971, " " " 121,000

" 1972, " " " 157,000

Does that take your breath? IT DID MINE! No use figuring any farther -- for if our calculations are right, 1972 will probably be the last year of this great work -- we will then have to be taken to a place of safety by God's divine power, or suffer the Great Tribulation. This is figuring into the future as far as it is in the past. In the past we have AVERAGED 47% increase per year. This is figuring a 30% per year increase for the NEXT 14 years.

But I do not believe the attendance will continue to increase even by 30% a year. I expect to see the PERCENT of increase begin to slacken off somewhat from now on, until attendance finally levels off. It is very possible that the PERCENT of increase from now on might go something like this: 1959, 30%; 1960, 25%; 1961, 22% with 8,000 attendance; 1962, 20%

increase; 1963, 20%; 1964, 18%; 1965, 15% with 15,650 attendance; 1966, 10% increase; 1967, 7 1/2%; 1968, 5%; 1969, 2 1/2%, and levelling off by 1970, with an attendance of about 20,000.

So -- these calculations meant that WE MUST NOW HAVE THE VISION TO PLAN AHEAD FOR AN AUDITORIUM THAT WOULD SEAT 20,000 or more. The plan we have had in mind would go up to perhaps 15,000 and could go up larger. So I put this idea up to the architect and engineers: Instead of adding a 121-foot-wide stem of a "T" on the rear, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE STRUCTURALLY TO ADD ANOTHER WHOLE TABERNACLE, SO TO SPEAK, OF 176 FEET OF WIDTH AND 121 FEET OF DEPTH, BUT WITHOUT ANY WALL BETWEEN THEM -- AND WITHOUT ANY PILLARS OR POSTS OR STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS? I asked them if the roof across the 176-foot center could be supported by a long curved truss over-head. This would be quite an engineering feat. They figured on it.

"YES!" they said. "IT COULD BE DONE!" The giant arched truss overhead, curving up from the ground at each end, could be like the span of a great bridge -- perhaps three-fourths as long as the span on the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco. But we would dispense with two side walls 167 feet long, and would go a long ways toward paying for the big "bridge span." This would give us an auditorium 167 feet wide and 242 feet deep. This main floor alone, without a pillar or post, would seat about 15,000 people; With balconies, it could seat from 20,000 to 25,000. It would probably be the largest auditorium ever built on earth, in actual seating capacity. At the rear and far corners people would be 230 to 250 feet from the speaker.

Then the question came up: if we could add on one entire additional Tabernacle area, we could add on two -- or three -- or ANY NUMBER.

There would be NO LIMIT -- except the ground to build it on, and the fact that after THREE of these huge units, the people would be too far away from the platform to see the speaker.

SO -- as far as building construction is concerned, we have chosen a type of construction that WE SHALL NEVER OUTGROW! No matter how big we grow, we can all meet at the same Tabernacle grounds, and all assemble in the SAME TABERNACLE TOGETHER! Isn't that a huge blessing from God?

Well, Brethren, I thought this would be INTERESTING to you, as it certainly is to me. Of course we are going to have to build a new dining hall in another couple years -- and to enlarge the present one with balconies THIS YEAR, before next fall.

Also, we have found a new type of heavy galvanized iron booth, with a single room and roofed porch, which will house from two to six people of one family -- and a larger one that would house six, eight or ten. I think we can make a deal to construct them, in quantities of 100, with cot or bed-springs (members to bring their own bedding), so they can be paid for by charging members a rental of \$40 or so for the entire eight or ten days they would be there, and let these booths pay for themselves in ten years. WOULD YOU LIKE TO RENT ONE FOR NEXT FALL? They are attractive, with three windows in each, and should be much better than a tent. IF ENOUGH OF OUR MEMBERS WANT THEM, WE MAY CONSTRUCT 100 OF THEM BEFORE NEXT FALL. They would not cost the Church any money, actually, for I think we can get them on a 10% down, and 10% a year basis. Those who rent them will automatically pay for them, about as cheap as pitching a tent, and a lot less cost than a motel. The first 100 to reserve one will get them, provided you will be willing to send in the rent in advance so we can make the first payment to the manufacturers. DO NOT SEND MONEY FOR THESE BOOTHS NOW, as we do not as yet have definite terms and rates. But if interested, LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY, and I will send you a picture, with dimensions and complete information.

But MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL -- KEEP UP YOUR MONTHLY PLEDGES, OR THE LARGEST SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR THE BUILDING FUND YOU POSSIBLY CAN, EVERY MONTH. Money has not been coming in at the rate we have to pay out, since the Feast. WE MUST INCREASE IT. OR LOSE THE TABERNACLE WE ALREADY HAVE! We CAN keep it up -- WE MUST. God bless you, Brethren -- GOD'S WORK MUST COME FIRST, and KEEP GOING ON!

With love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong