

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91123

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PRESIDENT and PASTOR

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Dear Inner Family of Brethren
and Co-Workers with Christ:

Here I am, seven-and-a-half miles high, flying back to Pasadena, after the most successful round-the-world trip so far. Exciting things have happened -- and even more exciting events in this great Work loom now immediately ahead. I have much to tell you!

First, though, let's get our bearings. Let's see where at the moment -- the progression of world events -- the progress of this Work in relation to it.

NEVER has there been a year like 1973. Stop and CONSIDER a moment! Four governments OVERTHROWN in the one year. I had indirect personal contact with three of them -- Afghanistan, Chile, Thailand. Then there was Greece. The "Holy-Day-War" between the Arabs and Israel -- and I want to tell you of my "playing-hide- and-peek" with Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger as the Separation of Forces was finally signed.

Then the Vietnam war was still sputtering intermittently. There was the stepped-up terrorist skyjacking, wholesale machine gunning at Rome airport, bombing of planes, buildings, and people. The Watergate disaster, and the ENERGY CRISIS, hitting seriously EVERY NATION -- the unprecedented famine and wholesale starvation of people in Ethiopia. The world was rocked with violence and disasters as NEVER BEFORE!

What still greater disasters and evils will strike this year? World troubles are escalating with ever increasing momentum.

Yet, in the great Work of God, to which you and I have been called as Co-Workers with the living CHRIST, last year was the year of GREATEST accomplishment! And I want to tell you how THIS YEAR now looms as a GREATER YEAR BY FAR!

WHY is our Work -- GOD'S WORK -- so supremely IMPORTANT just NOW?

Let me put it in perspective. Let's stop and get our bearings of THIS MINUTE!

Over 1900 years ago, God sent His Son Jesus as His MESSENGER (Malachi 3:1) with a Message for mankind. It was the glorious GOOD NEWS of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD to bring PEACE, happiness, joy and abundance to this earth! (Mark 1:1, 14-15.) But people hated His Message -- HIS GOSPEL of the KINGDOM OF GOD. They put Him to death for proclaiming it.

Christ's Apostles, to whom He taught the Gospel of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, went out proclaiming that Good NEWS! And they, with the possible exception of John, also were martyred for proclaiming it!

Before, the end of the first century all history of the Church of God which Jesus Christ raised up, became LOST. There followed the "Lost Century" of Church history. A hundred years later history reveals the religion called "Christianity," proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ, but NOT proclaiming Christ's Gospel, THE KINGDOM OF GOD, to the world.

In fact, Jesus had warned that MANY would come in His name -- professing to be His ministers -- and saying that Jesus was the CHRIST, yet deceiving the whole world (Matthew 24:3-5, Revelation 12:9).

His disciples had asked what would be the sign of His COMING again to earth, as KING of kings, setting up His Kingdom -- the KINGDOM OF GOD -- to rule all nations -- at the END of our present age. The only sign Jesus gave by which we might know was that HIS Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD would, once again, be preached in all the world, as a witness

to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

Now think IF that Gospel had been preached to the world ever since the first century, then it could not be the sign that we are at the END of this age and that Christ's second coming is now NEAR!

The living CHRIST raised up this Work to proclaim THAT GOSPEL to the world as a witness! He called and chose me to get this job done! The living CHRIST started this Work, through me, putting this Message ON THE AIR by radio, beginning January 7, 1934. The PLAIN TRUTH was started February 1, 1934.

Gradually, Jesus Christ, the LIVING HEAD of this Work, has called more and more of you in our inner family, as Co-Workers with HIM, and with me, in proclaiming this Good NEWS of HOPE, of ASSURANCE, of LIGHT in a dark world, of His coming Kingdom to bring PEACE, and happiness, and JOY and abundance to this earth. It will be a WHOLE NEW AND DIFFERENT WORLD -- the wonderful WORLD TOMORROW!

The living and soon-coming Christ is using poor HUMAN INSTRUMENTS in His Work. He led me to START the Work on radio, and the printing press in January, 1934. That was in the UNITED STATES.

The Work grew gradually, at the rate of 30% growth year by year. It spread over the United States until we were on radio coast to coast, and also in Canada.

But when it came to getting this LAST MESSAGE FROM GOD TO ALL THE WORLD -- AS A WITNESS TO ALL NATIONS, I found we were STUCK!

I could not buy time on radio in Britain -- nor in France, Germany, nor in Russia, China, India, Japan, Indonesia.

THIS IS IMPORTANT. PLEASE UNDERSTAND!

I found the governments in these other nations around the world CONTROL RADIO, TELEVISION, and COMMUNICATIONS! The GOVERNMENTS try to control the MINDS, and the thinking of their people! It is different from the United States.

So what did we do? I was able to buy time on Radio Luxembourg, wedged in between France, Germany, Belgium and Holland. I tried to reach these nations from outside their borders -- from Radio Luxembourg. But they would only sell time between 11:00 p.m. and midnight. We went on the air there at 11:30 p.m. It was the best we could do. It reached A FEW people in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. BUT IT DID NOT REALLY GET GOD'S MESSAGE TO ENGLAND. Only partially!

I found I could buy time on Radio Ceylon. It was beamed, by shortwave, on the eastern coast of Africa, and down into south-eastern Asia. We received a SMALL response from those areas. BUT WE DID NOT REACH INDIA! Apparently it was beamed DIRECTIONALLY AWAY from India, probably demanded by the government of India. Also apparently it was beamed over and beyond even Ceylon, for we received almost no response from there!

I tried to reach China by buying time on Chiang Kai-shek's station on Formosa island. There was absolutely NO RESPONSE from China. I remember one letter came from a girl student in Taiwan. That was all. I tried buying time on Radio Monte Carlo, to reach Russia. Supposedly, it was beamed over all other countries from Monte Carlo, on the Mediterranean, all the way to Russia. I hired a supposedly fluent Russian interpreter to translate my scripts into Russian, and record them by his voice in the Russian language. THERE WAS NO RESPONSE, except one letter I remember, from one of the satellite countries -- but NOTHING from Russia.

We were able to buy time on a number of stations in Australia, but not the best stations, and always poor time.

I had to come to realize that while we have reached millions in the U.S. and Canada, and even in Australia, WE WERE NOT GETTING THE GOSPEL WITH ANY REAL EFFECTIVENESS INTO THE OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD!

Then about five years ago I began praying earnestly that God would show us how HE wanted to use us in getting HIS MESSAGE as a witness into those major countries around the world. We did the best job we could. We DO have a good circulation of The PLAIN TRUTH in many countries -- Britain, France, Germany, Holland. Through ads in Reader's Digest

we have gained circulation of The PLAIN TRUTH in Mexico, and other countries. But we were not reaching the BIG countries with sufficient EFFECTIVENESS!

About the same time, doors began to open for personal contacts and private meetings with heads of governments -- kings, presidents, prime ministers, etc. I KNEW by the absolutely unusual favor I was given in their eyes that this was of GOD. I said then, I did not yet know WHY -- but I knew God was providentially opening these doors -- giving me this unusual warmth, confidence, even affection in their eyes. I myself made no effort to open these doors, or to work my own way into these contacts. For example, when King Leopold of Belgium gave me a handwritten personal note to deliver to his friend the Imperial Crown Prince Akihito of Japan, I made no effort to make contact myself, because I did not want to make any personal effort myself to get to see the Prince. I was well acquainted with his uncle, Prince Mikasa, brother of the Emperor. But I had never met the Crown Prince. So I had the note taken to the Belgian Ambassador, asking him to deliver it.

Even though I made no personal effort to meet the Crown Prince, some months later the invitation came from him for a private meeting. And it proved to be a very interesting meeting of 45 minutes.

And by the way, since I last wrote to you, at the end of November, I was invited by Emperor Hirohito himself for a private audience. This is regarded as a most rare and high honor in Japan. I know many Japanese Congressmen who have not had the honor of a private meeting with their Emperor. No one was permitted to go in with me but the United States Ambassador. And even he said not a word, except the opening greeting, and on leaving, except to speak softly into my ear a couple of times when, because I am a little hard of hearing, I did not understand the Emperor.

But these doors kept opening. And finally, about a year ago, I came to realize WHY God was opening these doors.

This, unrealized at first, was the answer to the prayers. God was opening THE WAY to get HIS MESSAGE into these great nations where all doors had seemed to be slammed completely SHUT!

This past year, 1973, I have spoken to highly distinguished guests at dinners in Bangkok, Saigon, Manila, Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Tokyo, and New Delhi, India. At New Delhi I spoke to one hundred of India's very top people -- members of the Cabinet, members of Parliament, judges, leading businessmen, some ambassadors from other nations. At Tokyo, I spoke before 57 very distinguished guests, all invited by Prince Mikasa, including members of the Diet (their Congress), of the Cabinet, presidents of the two largest and most prestigious universities, leading businessmen.

But where does this bring us at this date?

Remember, I did not plan all this out in advance. The living Jesus Christ did! And this has been the procedure: First a personal private meeting with the head of state -- king, president, emperor, prime minister. Then, meetings with other top people in the government. Always I have been invited to come again. And after two or three visits -- often even on the very first visit -- very unusual favor has been given me in the eyes of the head of state, and his aides and other high ranking people in the government.

Then, a dinner has been arranged at which 50 to 100 of the nation's leading and distinguished people attend, and at which I speak. As well as I possibly can, in a speech of from 25 to 50 minutes, I do proclaim in this speech the Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD.

This whole procedure has developed over a period of nearly five years. I have had to learn HOW to put the Message. And Christ the Head of this Work has led me to understand HOW to say it, and how NOT to say it.

But I do now speak bluntly, and with all the force and power God gives me through His Holy Spirit!

Then, after this dinner, at which I have proclaimed the real heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the first big PUBLIC MEETINGS are planned, actually sponsored by officials high in the government!

And now, in a matter of DAYS, is to come the FIRST of the PUBLIC appearances, in Saigon. The United States has now pulled its soldiers out of South Vietnam, and I thought it fitting that we select that as the site for the FIRST public proclamations of God's promise of PEACE through the soon coming KINGDOM OF GOD!

Government officials are back of it -- planning it -- inviting the leading people of the country to come. The meetings will be Thursday night February 21, Friday night the 22nd, Saturday night the 23rd, in a 2,000-seat auditorium, and then the final

BIG meeting, Sunday night the 24th, outdoors in the big university STADIUM. The stadium has 12,000 bleacher seats, but with a football field inside a quarter-mile running track, there is standing room for MANY thousands.

Members of the South Vietnam Senate are planning it, and will see to getting out the crowds. It is possible that President Thieu may introduce me the final night at the stadium.

These meetings will be followed up with weekly Bible studies, similar to the programs for the Garner Ted Armstrong Personal Appearance campaigns in the United States and Canada. All this OPENS THE WAY TO GET THE GOSPEL MESSAGE to an ever wider number of people in that country. But it is absolutely UNIQUE in that it starts FROM THE TOP! Those RESPONSIBLE for the thinking and, to large extent, the beliefs of their people are hearing it first, and sponsoring the proclamation of it to their people!

The SECOND Public Appearance will be in Manila, a month later, in March. The campaign there is being sponsored by members of the Cabinet -- the highest officials next to the President! The third Public Appearance is now arranged for Addis Ababa in May.

There will be no such Public Campaign in April, since we are having the opening concert in the new auditorium at Pasadena, and the Ministers' Conference and the dedication of the auditorium, to be dedicated as GOD'S HOUSE at the present Headquarters of His Work on earth.

But plans are already laid for the third Public Meeting in Addis Ababa in May.

So NOW you see where these round-the-world trips have been leading! HOW WONDERFULLY our leader, Jesus Christ, has been guiding HIS WORK! And I would not be surprised if even radio and TV in these countries is not soon opened to us!

Now I'll have to be BRIEF in telling you about this latest January trip. In December in Tokyo, we learned that a group of eight Japanese Congressmen were being sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on an official Good Will tour of the Middle East in January. The three appointed to lead were good friends of ours. We were planning to visit the same areas in January, and invited them to fly with us instead of commercial scheduled airlines. They accepted.

At cities like New Delhi, Teheran, Addis Ababa, where we have many friends at the top of the countries, we were able to arrange dinners or receptions in their honor, and in the Arab oil cities, Kuwait, Dubai and Cairo, they opened the door for me to have meetings with heads of governments.

The door is now wide open to meet the top sheiks in several countries. We already met many on this trip, and I had a VERY warm personal meeting with the acting Prime Minister in Cairo. He has promised to arrange a private personal meeting with President Sadat on my next visit. President Sadat was in Damascus when I was in Cairo.

On the day the Separation of Forces, between the armies of Israel and Egypt was signed, at noon, we flew with some of the Japanese out to Aswan dam in the morning. Dr. Kissinger had been commuting back and forth between Aswan and Jerusalem, to bring about this agreement. President Sadat had been staying in a winter palace of his at Aswan, so his meetings with Dr. Kissinger were held there.

Our plane let down on the Aswan landing strip about 10:30 in the morning. The Air Force 707, labeled "THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" -- one of President Nixon's two "Air Force ONE" planes was being used by Dr. Kissinger, and was due there.

As we taxied to a stop, a brightly uniformed honor guard marched briskly to our airplane entrance, and lined up six on each side, in a salute position, as we debarked from our plane. It's possible they thought I was Dr. Kissinger.

The Kissinger plane arrived later. Early afternoon we left, and the big Air Force 707 was still standing there. We stopped at Luxor, since Mr. Rader and the Japanese had never seen the stupendous 3,000-year old Luxor and Karnak temples. At first the airport officials refused us any transportation except by public bus, because Secretary of State Kissinger was due to stop there. But then the Governor came and apologized, and offered us his private car. As we were returning back to the airport, Secretary Kissinger's motorcade met and sped past us. In front were about six motorcycle soldiers in brilliant uniforms, followed by a car with siren wide open, then some six or eight limousines. We saw Dr. Kissinger in the third one, and former Ambassador to Saigon, Ellsworth Bunker, whom I know, in the car behind.

The motorcade sped by at about 50-miles per hour. We continued on to the airport, and taxied past the Air Force 707 on the way to the runway.

The next day, while I was visiting with the Prime Minister, he was handed a note saying Mr. Sadat had just arrived from Damascus.

That evening, about dark, we took off from Cairo and flew direct to Tel Aviv. It created quite a sensation at the airport, when they learned we had flown direct from Cairo.

"NO ONE ever does that, but Kissinger!" they exclaimed. "Yes," I said, "Kissinger and US!"

That night we had a rather late dinner with an official who is a very good friend of ours. We wanted to know what was the Israeli reaction on the Separation of Forces agreement.

Our official friend asked urgently, "WHAT is the general reaction in Cairo over it?"

"Jubilation!" we replied. "What is the reaction here in Israel?" "JUBILATION," he replied. Well, that was BETTER THAN WAR!

There will be more of this fruit-bearing trip in the "Personal" article in the March PLAIN TRUTH.

Brethren and Co-Workers we simply have to realize that getting Christ's Gospel to the United States and Canada is one thing, but getting it to other nations is A TOTALLY DIFFERENT MATTER!

In the beginning of the lead article of the February, 1974, GOOD NEWS is this significant statement: "Since the whole concept of the democratic system is a government 'of the people' -- that government is responsible to the people, and the people are the ones who actually do the governing." (Emphasis mine.)

But in most of these other countries it is different. The POWER is vested in the GOVERNMENT. The people are responsible to the GOVERNMENT. The Government therefore controls radio, television, and so far as possible what is taught to the people.

In GOD'S sight, the KING is the kingdom, or nation. For example, in Daniel's prophecy of the 7th chapter, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth ..." (verse 17.) And in verse 23, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth ..."

When I get Christ's vital Message of the Kingdom of God -- His Gospel -- to the king, president, prime minister -- and others high in the government in such nations, I have, in God's sight, gotten His Message to that nation or kingdom.

Yet in this NEW DIMENSION of this great Work, we are being able to go much further -- by public meetings, I am able to get it to THOUSANDS of others who are the LEADERS in these great nations.

On this last trip I talked candidly and frankly to Emperor Haile Selassie about the KINGDOM OF GOD, and of Christ's coming to intervene and GOVERN THE WHOLE WORLD BY SUPERNATURAL POWER!

It should THRILL US to realize how wonderfully God has led the way -- opened these massive doors -- given me such FAVOR, RESPECT, HIGH CREDIBILITY in the eyes of top leaders of so many nations!

And NEVER FORGET -- the true GOSPEL of Jesus Christ was no longer proclaimed to the world after the close of the FIRST CENTURY! ANOTHER "gospel" was proclaimed thereafter (Galatians 1:6, II Corinthians 11:4, 13-15) - until God raised up THIS WORK to which He has called YOU to be a Co-Worker! NO ONE ELSE IS PROCLAIMING THIS TRUE GOSPEL to the world today -- or has done so since the first century.

HOW THANKFUL we should be to have been called to have a part in it -- proclaiming this glorious GOOD NEWS of coming world PEACE, and eternal SALVATION to the WORLD!

NEVER was your generous part in it more needed!

THANK YOU for it. I NEED YOUR EARNEST AND URGENT PRAYERS.

With much LOVE, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong