

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Questions and Answers

Question: Some Church areas have choir practice on the Sabbath for one to two hours. Is this a right use of God's Sabbath?

Answer: Choir practice should not be held on God's Sabbath. The one-to two-hour practice session is the type of work that should be done on another day.

In addition to the work required by the individual members, choir practice sessions on the Sabbath are often very disruptive to other family members. Those choir members who must drive considerable distance to Church have little, if any, time for personal and family Bible study when practice is on the Sabbath.

In lieu of a weekly practice, some choir directors record the various choral parts on cassette tapes and distribute these to the choir members who then practice on their own during the week. Then on the Sabbath prior to services when the choir will sing, the director has a short warm-up of 30 minutes or less. This is one way to have a choir when the members are scattered. However, it does take extra work on the part of the choir director.

In areas where it is simply not feasible for the congregation to have its own choir, individuals having appropriate musical talents should be asked to do special music.

The purpose of a Church choir is to honor and glorify God as well as edify the congregation. A choir can be a great blessing provided the practice is conducted during the week and the time involved does not become a burden for the individual choir members or their families.

Appreciation for the Second Ministerial Refreshing Program

Dear Messrs. Armstrong and Tkach:

Greetings from Bacolod City, Philippines! My wife and I have just returned home from the Refreshing Program in God's Church Headquarters in Pasadena, California, and now we want to write to you.

This was our first time to attend the Refreshing Program, and we want to thank you very much Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Tkach and also Mr. Guy Ames who made it possible for us to attend. Once again we were able to see the beautiful campus of God's Church Headquarters with its many fine buildings and facilities, and be able

to meet many of God's ministers at Headquarters and from other lands.

My wife Rosalia and I want to thank you and all the staff who took part in the lectures from the bottom of our hearts. We also want to thank all the ministers for the sermons they gave in the three Sabbath services we attended there. The Refreshing Program was really very refreshing, very reviving, very strengthening and very renovating. We are renewed. The subjects covered are very vital and important. They teach us the reality of our responsibilities in the ministry. They gave us material for our sermons to God's flock for many months and years. In fact, I have already given a part of the subject "prophecy" to God's congregation last Sabbath.

In the Headquarters of God's Church, we observed and saw the unity of the Spirit, love, service, friendship, dedication and determination. Everybody working hard, especially you Mr. Armstrong. We saw how God is using you all in God's Church Headquarters. Our belief that we are living at the end time is confirmed. We can confirm the truth that God has chosen you Mr. Armstrong as His apostle to finish the Work, and to warn this troubled world of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God. We are chosen by God also to be behind you to hold up your hands to do the Work. We are most blessed in the Work. We want to thank you Mr. Armstrong for ordaining me in the ministry many years ago in Pasadena, and your confirmation of my ministry while you were here in Manila last February, 1982.

Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Tkach, thank you again.

Pedro and Rosalia Ortiguero

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Greetings from Strasbourg, France! This is a belated big "thank you" for the wonderful Refreshing Program my wife and I attended last June. Classes were really encouraging and uplifting, giving us a boost of enthusiastic zeal! As soon as we moved here from Belgium, I was able to use the material given.

Olivier and Sue Carion

Dear Mr. Tkach:

Thank you for coordinating such an inspiring refresher on behalf of Mr. Armstrong. And thanks to all the other dedicated people who helped with such a wonderful program.

We are all such insignificant specks in the whole plan of God, and at times my wife and I have to pinch ourselves, realizing that God has actually chosen us to be involved in the most important job on earth. What a privilege it is to assist in teaching the royal family of God.

Grant and Jenny Spong

Greetings Mr. Tkach:

Just a long overdue note of thanks and appreciation for the Refreshing Program we were able to enjoy and benefit from. Barb and I send our deepest thanks to all at Headquarters for making the entire program so "refreshing." Also a special thanks to Mr. Armstrong for taking time to speak to all of us. That was well worth the whole trip.

We were sincerely amazed and elated at the excellence displayed throughout the College. Surely, "our arm is strong."

Since returning home we have been busier than ever and are still "munching" on our "noats." Thanks again for everything. Our prayers and thoughts are with you all at Headquarters.

Gene and Barbara Watkins

Comments From Monthly Church Reports

ANN ARBOR, MI--RAY WOOTEN: PM activity has been good for several months. The telecast here has helped. Mr. Armstrong seems to be more powerful on every broadcast, which certainly generates more interest in people. They want to learn more about God and His Kingdom.

HARRISON, AR--TOM BLACKWELL: All are impressed with what God does through Mr. Armstrong at age 90, especially the job he does on TV. It is good to see members saving second and third tithe faithfully again.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO--JOHN CAFOUREK: PM activity is beginning to increase in the area. I have been hearing comments that many people who are not members of the Church are captivated by Mr. Armstrong's weekly telecast.

LAUREL, DE--DAVID REGISTER: The PM's we've been contacting lately are really top quality and their enthusiasm and presence at Church is producing a renewed excitement among the membership. Enthusiasm is running high at this time.

ROCHESTER, NY--LESLIE A. SCHMEDES: Mr. Armstrong's latest letter had a sobering effect on the congregation. There is more of a realization that this age is fast coming to a close. The result is more unity.

SPRINGFIELD, MO--GEORGE A. MEEKER, JR.: The members are very responsive to Headquarters and are especially interested in Mr. Armstrong's activities and travels. They ask about his activities frequently. Mr. Armstrong's latest sermon tape was outstanding. Also the new BIBLE STORY volume is quite impressive.

BAKER, OR--JEFF MCGOWAN: Most of the members appear to be doing well spiritually, but unemployment appears to be a big problem in the area because of the depressed construction industry. However, those who apply Matthew 6:33 are having their needs provided just as God faithfully promised. The family Bible studies

have been beneficial and The PLAIN TRUTH Newsstand Program has been very effective in the area.

JONESBORO, AR--CLYDE KILOUGH: Seems that every month someone comes to grips with some long-term problems that God brings to the surface. This has been a trend for several months and is resulting in some steady progress in individual lives.

SACRAMENTO, CA--JOEL LILLEGREEN: Both my wife and I really appreciated attending Session #7 of the second refreshing program. More than ever we can see the evidence of God's Spirit of unity among the ministry. Regardless of our different nationalities, we are one ministry serving with Mr. Armstrong under Jesus Christ. Truly we are God's worldwide Church.

GRAND RAPIDS, MI--BILL MILLER: There appears to be an increased effort on the part of members of local churches of the world to complain loudly in establishments that have PT stands. Members are fighting back by finding new locations as fast as we lose the old ones. Up to half the baptized members are actively involved in PT newsstand distribution.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE

Excellent Response to GOOD NEWS Offer

A few month's ago Mr. Armstrong offered a subscription to the GOOD NEWS to 142,000 people who are current or former Correspondence Course students. Response has come in from over 39,000 in the United States. We estimated a 30% response to Mr. Armstrong's letter and so far it has reached 27.4% with requests still coming in.

--Ray Wright, Publishing Services

ON THE WORLD SCENE

WEST GERMANY: MIRED IN DANGEROUS POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

It had never happened before in West Germany's 33-year-long political experience. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic, the government changed hands by means of a parliamentary vote of no confidence rather than through the normal channel of national elections. (Both methods are provided for in the FRG's "basic law" or constitution.)

Within the relatively brief span of a fortnight--September 17 (eve of the Feast of Trumpets) to October 1 (eve of first day of the Feast of Tabernacles)--the center-left government of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was out, replaced by the center-right government of a new Helmut--Helmut Kohl. One thing is certain about the changeover. It was a controversial one, and saddles Bonn with a very clouded political future in the near term. The West German nation is in danger of becoming politically polarized between left and right, with the center being vacated.

The Crisis, Briefly

The September 17 crisis was precipitated by growing frictions in the Schmidt government between the dominant Social Democratic Party and the

minority Free Democratic Party. The two had opposite views on how to rescue the nation from its growing economic malaise (stagnant growth, 7.4% unemployment and the bankruptcy of some famous old companies).

The Socialists, in typical fashion, wanted to move the country further in the direction of governmental bailout spending, higher taxes, etc., much in the manner of the Democratic Party in America. The Free Democrats said it was time to stimulate the economy instead through cuts in taxes and welfare spending, more along the line of "Reaganomics." When the government's Economics Minister, a Free Democrat, went public on his own with a 36-page document calling for such a program, the move infuriated the Chancellor. The stage was then set for a showdown between Schmidt and his four FDP cabinet ministers. Under threat of being fired, they quit, bringing down the government.

At the same time, FDP Chairman and Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, announced that the FDP would "jump the aisle" and offer its seats to the two conservative parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian wing, the Christian Social Union (CSU). After hard negotiations, the CDU/CSU accepted, ensuring the successful outcome of the October 1 "constructive vote of no confidence."

Free Democrats On Way Out

The legal but unorthodox alternative method of changing government has not proved popular with the voting public in West Germany, which felt it was simply ignored in the process. Chancellor Kohl has promised new elections for March, 1983, but some experts believe they may be postponed until later. Thus the government as it stands now has a certain air of illegitimacy about it.

The Free Democrats have been castigated for their infidelity (though, to be fair, the FDP was allied years before with the CDU/CSU). In two subsequent state elections, in Hesse and in Bavaria, FDP candidates have been drubbed, the party failing to clear the five percent threshold for legislative representation.

Herr Kohl, loser in a frustratingly close election to Schmidt in 1976, has also been criticized as being too quick to grab for the reigns of power, via the secondary no-confidence vote route. Herr Schmidt had called for new elections as the proper way out of the governmental crisis. So did Bavaria's Franz Josef Strauss, who was convinced that the CDU/CSU would win a clear majority of seats (at least 249) in any new government. Herr Strauss knows that the slumping FDP is nearing oblivion, and may not make it into any subsequent Bundestag. Why depend upon this "lame duck" minority party now, he asks, and give them four key cabinet positions?

Herr Strauss, in fact, was extremely critical of the FDP's switch. In the first place, he doesn't want these middle-of-the-road old-style liberals on the conservative "team" since they will pull the CDU/CSU to the left. In his typical outspokenness, Strauss described the impact of having to share rule with the FDP in this manner: "He who goes to bed with a syphilitic must not be surprised when he infects himself."

Secondly, Strauss disdains the perfidious manner in which the FDP acted. He even called them "traitors" to the former government they were a part of. They are therefore not to be trusted, in his view.

Strauss, nevertheless, deferred to Kohl in the latter's bid for power now. But the Bavarian strong man, Germany's shrewdest politician by far, still had the last laugh. He backed off on his demand for early elections but induced Kohl and Genscher to put off the no-confidence vote from September 24 to October 1. By doing so, Strauss forced the FDP to test its strength--or the lack of it as it turned out--in the Hesse state election.

The Uncertain Months Ahead

So where does West Germany stand today, politically? A number of factors immediately come to the fore.

1. The CDU/CSU is once again in power, but rather shakily so. Until the next elections the conservatives must rely on the discredited FDP for parliamentary support.
2. The Socialists, under former Chancellor Schmidt and his predecessor, Willy Brandt, are searching for their proper role as the opposition party. Brandt wants to keep the more conservative Schmidt from running as SPD chancellor candidate again. Brandt wants to move the party further to the left where he feels its true constituency now lies. He would like to corral many of the so-called "Greens"--environmentalists and anti-nuclear activists--back into the fold. Schmidt, however, believes this would be a big mistake, that it would alienate the large number of blue-collar SPD voters. These might desert the SPD for the CDU much as their counterparts in the U.S. dumped President Carter for Mr. Reagan in 1980.
3. The Greens themselves, organized as a loose anti-establishment party, are becoming a formidable block in their own right. They supplanted the FDP as the third party in Hesse (as they had in other states earlier) and barely missed doing the same in conservative Bavaria. Leaders of the Greens turn off older Germans--with their beards some of them look like characters out of the old Snuffy Smith comic strip--but they appeal to many young Germans under 30. The Greens will present an increasingly severe challenge to the normal functioning of government.
4. Political instability is on the rise in Bonn. One already sees a big cloud over the next federal elections. Suppose Herr Kohl cannot set the economy right and the CDU/CSU does not gain a majority, even though they gain more seats than the SPD. The FDP will be out of it entirely. In the middle (actually far to the left) will likely squat the Green movement--as an indigestible lump. What then? Will there be a minority CDU/CSU government dependent for its survival upon votes from conservative SPD delegates on crucial issues? Or will there be (worst of all) an SPD-Green government? Or another ineffective CDU/CSU-SPD "grand coalition" as in 1966-69? It is possible that the next elections, whenever they are, could provide the ultimate test for West German democracy.

Some Bundestag members in the October 1 debate even made references to "another Weimar"--alluding to the ill-fated German republic between World Wars I and II. The founding fathers of the post-World War II West German democratic state were determined not to repeat one of their predecessor government's main weaknesses--that of the proliferation of many small political parties which led to parliamentary paralysis. They instead put a five percent threshold minimum on representation. However, even this safety factor no longer holds firm. The FDP is on the way out, the left and right are becoming polarized, with the Greens gaining a legalized foothold. Result: looming political paralysis once again, with the certain call some day for a "strong man" to show the way out of the dilemma.

5. The common consensus is that Helmut Kohl will not be able to provide the leadership needed for the rough months ahead. Basically a provincial Rhineland politician--"The Colorless Man From the Sticks" headlined the TIMES of London--he lacks expertise in foreign affairs. Beyond this, it is probably the brot-und-butter economic issues that will make or break him. West German unemployment may soon go up to 10% from 7.4%. He won't be at fault, but he will be blamed for the rise, just as Mr. Reagan is in the U.S. Already such words as "clumsiness" and "naivete" are being used to describe Herr Kohl in his first few days in office.
6. Behind Kohl now and looming ever larger over the whole West German political horizon is the dominating figure of Franz Josef Strauss. The October 7 issue of DER STERN, the West German popular weekly, depicted as much on its cover--a small picture of Kohl with a huge profiled shadow of Strauss in the background. Strauss is playing his cards very cautiously, speaking out when and where he deems appropriate, retreating at other times. He was hardly to be seen in the historic October 1 Bundestag debate when Kohl and Genscher engineered the switch. That was their game, not his.

In a recent SPIEGEL interview, Bavaria's Minister-President took aim at the policy being pursued by the conservatives. "Our greatest enemy is impatience," he said. Franz Josef Strauss seems to sense that his time is inevitably coming--a time when economic and social conditions will be so severe in West Germany that the German people will finally turn to him for the dynamic leadership that will be required.

Until then, as Strauss has been quoted as saying on a number of occasions: "I don't care who is chancellor under me."

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau

For The Record

On page 15 in the September 20th issue of the PGR, the second paragraph above Mr. Hogberg's name (beginning with the words, "One cannot help but think...") was accidentally indented, thus erroneously indicating that it was part of the previously quoted article.