

SOCIALS
SPOKESMAN CLUB

RADIO CHURCH OF GOD

WORLD HEADQUARTERS

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RODERICK C. MEREDITH, Minister

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Dear Fellow Ministers:

Greetings from Big Sandy! At Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong's request, my family and I have come over here and have been here about a week now and are really enjoying it. And this is Ambassador College! Much progress has been made since most of you have been here and things are really taking shape on the campus to give this more of a "collegiate" atmosphere.

The four new dormitories which are completed are certainly beautiful and progress on the other four is continuing at a good pace only interrupted recently, however, by the heavy rains and some minor flooding here on the campus. The walk, zeal, and enthusiasm of the students here at Big Sandy is certainly remarkable and they definitely have a special "esprit de corps" here on this campus. It seems they really enjoy "pioneering" and the various other aspects here in this new college. I will be teaching all of my classes here that I teach in Pasadena -- Freshman Bible, Epistles of Paul and Advanced Public Speaking -- and will be taking many of the Assemblies and Forums during my stay. All of the men have been very enthusiastic about my coming with news from Headquarters and the field ministry, and I am sure that it will be very profitable. However, I will only have time to stay here two and one-half or three weeks -- so will probably be back in Pasadena about ten days or so after you receive this letter. So keep sending in your reports and keep in touch with Pasadena! But you may, of course, wish to call me at Big Sandy if any emergency matter arises within the next few days.

Everything is fine also at Pasadena, and everyone there is in good health except for a serious cold which Mr. Portune has had recently. However, the receipt of money and letters has been way down and the students there have been fasting

and praying about the situation. Hearing this, I talked with Mr. McCullough and the Student Body President here and we called a student fast for today here at Big Sandy. I am sure that it will do all of the students a great deal of good as well as helping all of us to get through to God so that He will intervene in a special way at this time. A Co-Worker Letter has arrived from Mr. Armstrong and should bring in a good return -- especially with the prayers, fasting and dedication of God's people. So please exhort all of your congregations about this -- let them know about the prayer and fasting at the two colleges -- and exhort many of them to do the same and to really RESPOND to Mr. Armstrong's Co-worker Letter as they have not done for many months!

I do not have the schedule of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Armstrong but they should be due in Hong Kong about now and will probably be arriving in Israel within a few days. Mr. Ted Armstrong wired from Bricket Wood the other day that he was leaving for the Middle East that day -- Monday I believe it was -- and would be making a broadcast from the Suez Canal! So be sure to remember in prayer both of the Armstrongs -- their wives and others who will be traveling with them there in the Middle East. I am sure that this trip of Mr. Ted Armstrong's to the Middle East will have a dramatic impact on many of his future broadcasts and articles and is most important at this time.

It was certainly good to see many of you during the Passover season -- and I say this for many of the other ministers coming out from Headquarters as well as myself personally! Mr. Mocarow and I conducted very fine meetings during the first part of the Days of Unleavened Bread at Detroit. Four hundred eighty took the Passover there and about eleven hundred thirty were present on the first Holy Day. This is tremendous growth in an area that only had a very few hundred in attendance just two or three years ago! Mr. and Mrs. Mocarow are doing a fine job, and we were very happy to visit them in this mushrooming area. Flying to Cincinnati for the last part of the Days of Unleavened Bread, my wife and I joined Mr. Dick Ames and his wife, Kathryn. We had three very inspiring days of meetings there in the large Music Hall of Cincinnati and had a total of about sixteen hundred in attendance on the afternoon of the final Holy Day! That was certainly an inspiring crowd for a field area apart from either of the colleges and the people were very responsive.

About seven hundred sixty partook of the Passover here at Big Sandy under Mr. Ted Armstrong's direction, and approximately two thousand were present for the first Holy Day here. They had a very fine Feast in every way, I understand.

At Pasadena, Mr. Portune led the Festival services there and a total of eleven hundred eighty-seven partook of the Passover and an over-flow crowd of thirty-one hundred fifty were present on the first Holy Day. Because the Pasadena Civic Auditorium only holds about twenty-nine hundred fifty, they had to have a couple of hundred people sitting in the lobby and around behind the stage in order to get everyone within hearing of the speaker! So it was a very inspiring Festival there.

Other areas had record attendances as well, and the Feast seems to have been very inspiring and successful in all the areas around the world. Naturally, we were not trying to get as many Churches to come in for every area as we have done in the past or to have the people stay as long. But in the areas where we were able to have three- or four-day services at the beginning or end of the Festival, they do seem to have been very helpful and yet not to have strained the people's job or financial situations in any way.

One bit of ministerial news which was decided upon after my last letter is that Mr. Roger West and his wife have been transferred from the Los Angeles Church to assist Mr. Blackwell in the Kansas City Church Area. This will enable Mr. Blackwell to have more help in visiting as he is losing his second man, Carl Franklin, to Mr. Bryce Clark within a very few weeks. Also, he does need this help in organizing all of the office procedures and Mr. West has proved a very competent man at this type of thing.

Also, let me say that we will be sending out to you written evaluations of the second men coming to your respective areas within the next few weeks. It may take us a little time to write all of these up from our own observations and Manpower notes, but we will try to get them to you before or about the time your new man arrives in each area. And be sure to get well acquainted with any new assistant coming into your area, talk to him and his wife a good deal during the first few days if possible and lay the groundwork for really WORKING WITH him so that he can achieve his maximum effectiveness in Christ's Ministry in the future.

Now for some INSTRUCTION:

I want to devote the rest of this particular letter to one over-all situation which I feel is very important to discuss fully with you in which we need all of your individual and collective cooperation.

Years ago, when we were first beginning to establish local Churches, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong cautioned on the danger of the people getting wrapped up in each individual congregation too much as a local "social club" and beginning to be independent and doing things and seeing things in their own ways. He had, of course, had years of experience in the field ministry and had attempted to work with various ordained or self-made "ministers" who had no respect for what should have been regarded as the Headquarters at that time and no sense of cooperation with the one who should have been directing the Work of God and keeping it driving ahead in a coherent fashion.

Much of this "independent" spirit and lack of cooperation in the ministers was solved with the establishment of Ambassador Colleges and the training of young men who were imbued with the concept of working together as a "team." However, many still have that tendency once they get out on their own -- as we have pointed out in recent letters. One of the other aspects of Mr. Armstrong's early concern is a continuing problem even more, however. That is the danger of many of our Church Areas in becoming somewhat like "social clubs" and getting involved in ENTIRELY too many extraneous activities!

One of our District Superintendents recently reported that he noticed the ministers in his area were falling short in keeping up in reading The PLAIN TRUTH, The GOOD NEWS, the Correspondence Course, new booklets and other material from Headquarters. Many were certainly falling behind in hearing the daily Broadcast and in their own personal Bible study, prayer and other reading. Many of our field men, he reported, lose Sunday morning and early afternoon in fatigue due to the tiresome week-end circuit of two Churches, Spokesman Club, driving, song leading, anointing, etc. Many of the ministers get behind in these personal spiritual responsibilities and feel convicted and guilty a great deal of the time.

There is also a tendency among many of these "over-involved" ministers -- especially those who have worked in one Church Area a long time -- to continue to harangue along

the same lines in preaching. Because they are too busy to study or pray as they should, because they are over-extended in all kinds of Spokesman Clubs, basketball leagues, father-son outings, etc., they do not have the new material flowing into their mind to preach new and inspiring things as they should. It often seems that the lack of growth in certain people, therefore, flavors such a minister's sermons instead of the never-give-up enthusiasm for people to change and encouragement over those who have already changed plus constant new ideas and perspectives from Scripture and world news, new zeal and enthusiasm derived from personal prayer, meditation and fasting.

This over-all problem is something I think we can really SOLVE -- at least for the most part!

With the tremendous number of men which Almighty God is enabling us to send out this summer -- the largest in history -- plus the eight men who already went out at midyear, we will have better help, over-all, in the field ministry than ever before! This should be very encouraging, and is following Mr. Armstrong's directives in not spreading ourselves too thin. It will also enable us to take stock, think carefully and be sure we do NOT get "over-involved" again in all our Church Areas as we have so often in the past. Once these new men take hold and develop enough that they can carry weight in the area, they should be able to take some of these Bible Studies, Spokesman Clubs and other activities off the shoulders of the full minister in charge. Then, he will begin to have more free time to USE -- not waste -- in studying his Bible at least one hour per day, praying a similar amount of time, reading widely not only from newspapers and magazines but other books about current events, biographies and autobiographies of great men, history, etc. He will have time to plan, think, meditate on how the information he is learning can be used in his sermons, Bible Studies and Visiting Program training classes. He can -- if he will -- thus impart more of a "big-minded" approach into his entire Church Area, more zest, more of a sense of a sincere enthusiasm and total dedication to get out the Work of God all over this earth!

The above is certainly a GOAL for which we should all be most enthusiastic!

Now I want to give a series of definite suggestions, guidelines and proposals for accomplishing this GOAL.

1. Remember -- and never forget -- that the main responsibility of the field ministry is to FEED THE FLOCK. This is accomplished through Church services, Bible Studies and ministerial visits. Additional activities such as Spokesman Clubs, etymology classes, Church socials, Church camp-outs and Church-sponsored basketball, volleyball and softball teams are all EXTRA. They are NOT part of the primary program and each minister must be very careful that they do not begin consuming too much of his personal time. Also, the minister should make sure that all of these activities do not take too much of the valuable time of his leading laymen in the Church who often bear the heaviest burden in organizing and directing these activities and who -- because they are leaders -- seem to be counted on to be present and take a leading part in ALL such activities regardless of their own business and family responsibilities!

2. Remember Mr. Armstrong's directions that all new Churches, Bible Studies and Spokesman Clubs must have definite approval from Headquarters regardless of whether or not such plans are within the established guidelines. Generally, these proposals should be written up in detail and submitted to Headquarters well in advance of their planned beginning date so that proper thought and counsel may guide any decision regarding them. This, too, will enable us to keep from spreading ourselves too thin. The following are some guidelines regarding the establishment of new Churches, Studies and Clubs:

A. Generally curtail the institution of all new Churches, Studies and Clubs until there is a minimum of one ordained, FULL-TIME elder or minister for each Church, each Study, and each Spokesman Club. This would mean that no full-time minister or elder would have more than three nights per week taken up with these activities and would have only two nights taken if he held no Visiting Program training class that week. With Friday night taken because of the Sabbath and sermon preparation, this would leave each ordained, full-time man a minimum of at least three nights each week to visit with the people in his congregations. Generally he would have more. This is vital since evenings are generally the most profitable visiting time as the man and his wife can be visited at the same time.

B. Severely curtail Church-sponsored basketball, volleyball and softball games and teams and encourage the men of the Church to spend this time with their families working around the house or doing things TOGETHER. The wives and children

will have the opportunity to work and play under the guidance and leadership of the father. Since this society is an upside-down society, there is too little opportunity to be with, work with and be influenced by the man of the house. Part of the commission given to this Work is to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children.

In the recent past, as many of you know, we have been so involved in some Church Areas that the leading men of the Church had entirely too little time to be with their own families, jobs and personal responsibilities. This must be changed in the future.

All of you ministers, in sermons and Bible Studies, should teach the families how to work and play together as a family with "dad" providing the leadership and guidance. A minister can often get his exercise during the week with calisthenics or handball with other ministers and can set the proper example for the Church by participating in occasional athletic activity every four to eight weeks through the off season and usually not more than once a week during the season for an athletic team. If there are to be Church teams, these should be limited to one each year. Thus, if there is a basketball team, there should be no softball or volleyball team later in the year. The season for such teams should be limited to approximately eight weeks. In this way, the ministers and dozens of the leading men in the Church will end up with far more time for visiting the brethren and for their own personal family and business responsibilities.

C. Use Sunday as the MAIN visiting day. This is the day nearly all of our field ministers have acknowledged as an actual fact most helpful to use visiting the Church families when the men are home and they can all be visited together. Line up the visits for each Sunday ahead of time and have the people expect you to be there at an approximate time. If the minister makes his first contact on Sunday morning by about 11:00 a.m. after getting extra sleep to rejuvenate him from the round of Sabbath duties, he can make at least three to five visits each Sunday.

D. Monday morning should be used as an office day and the information for reports should be in the mail -- at the latest -- by midnight Monday. Then the rest of Monday is suggested for time off with the family or to do as you please to rest and relax after a very busy weekend.

E. Unless you gain special permission from Headquarters, all etymology classes and similar unusual and time-consuming activities should be dropped within a few weeks after this letter. It is simply not the policy of God's Church to proliferate all of these unusual activities which take more of the minister's time and the time of the leading members as explained above.

F. Much more emphasis and time should be spent in planning for God's Feasts and Sabbaths as real enjoyable occasions of true Christian fellowship. All other Church activities should be de-emphasized. All-day outings and picnics for the entire Church should be limited to two, or at the most three a year. A few other evening "Church socials" may be added -- but these should be kept to a minimum and more emphasis on planning and making the annual Feasts more enjoyable should be encouraged.

G. In many areas, the creeping "involvement" in Spokesman Clubs and all the related activities are not being kept in the proper perspective with our secondary commission to feed the flock. The general impression among many Church members is that if one is not in a Spokesman Club year after year, he is not growing and not really "in" the inner circles of the Church. Many currently attending Spokesman Club are not growing and would quickly drop out if they thought they could without being stigmatized as being a "quitter" or being in a bad attitude.

These "lifetime memberships" and this feeling generally of an "obligation" to ALWAYS be in a Spokesman Club are doing more harm than good. Spokesman Club is not God's Church or the Kingdom of God. It is an opportunity for the men of the Church to grow in leadership and further qualify for service in God's Church and Kingdom. For some, it may be a needed social activity for at least a time and encouragement to feel "a part" of God's Church and Work. But this should NOT last throughout a lifetime in most cases!

For the field Churches, I suggest the following revision of our total concept of Spokesman Clubs and their relationship to the Work in the local congregations:

Nearly all normal, reasonably balanced men in the Church should be strongly encouraged to join a Spokesman Club. He should be in a Club for the time required to complete the assignments in the manual. Upon completion of all the assigned

speeches, he should receive a certificate of completion and end his Spokesman Club career "with honor."

Those who sincerely desire further opportunity for Spokesman Club training should counsel with the minister in charge and obtain special permission. The minister should carefully evaluate each of these special requests and if he feels the man has definite Local Elder and speaking potential, or if he thinks it really is in the best interests of the man -- without harming the Club -- to be in a Spokesman Club longer, he can get permission. If not, he explains this to the man.

This change in our concept will reduce the number of Spokesman Clubs, enable the minister to take a greater interest in his one Club and work with each spokesman more closely. It will help ALL Church men to profit and grow and will eliminate those who have no desire to continue. It will enable business and professional men who may need to attend special meetings or classes in connection with their own business to have an "out" after a year or two of Club activities and not feel that they must ALWAYS -- till the end of time -- be attending a Spokesman Club as part of their Christian duty. Then, no doubt, many such men will want back in again later on -- and for very good reason. Thus, the spokesmen who are active in each Club will be more appreciative, zealous and enthusiastic about using the opportunity they have to develop their full potential of leadership and service through the spokesman activities.

Well, that about winds it up for this time. I sincerely ask all of you, in love, to ACT on these instructions and I know that you will. Obviously, if we are able to bring all of the Church activities more closely into line with these guidelines it will enable all of you to have more time for study, prayer and your family responsibilities. And while all of us are fasting for God's Work here at Big Sandy -- as the ministers and students fasted at Pasadena yesterday -- perhaps it will not be out of line to remind all of you to do the same as you have opportunity, to TAKE TIME to begin studying your Bibles one hour per day, praying for about the same amount of time and "drinking deeply" of God's Holy Spirit that we all may have more of His mind, His love, and His almighty POWER to use in this world-wide Work which He is doing through us as human instruments.

Your servant in Christ,

Roderick C. Meredith

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