

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

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TO ALL MINISTERS: U.S., AND AROUND THE WORLD.

GREETINGS, in Jesus Christ's name, and in His service!

I have just returned from a trip which began with a visit to the "dig" in Jerusalem, and ended in Orr, Minnesota after going all the way around the world.

I thought I would do something unusual -- surprise all of you (especially the many newer ministers -- I suppose that means, to me, all those ordained within the past five or six years) because I know you have received only a very few letters from me in the past few years. But I wanted to say a few things about the trip -- and, more important -- some overall things about the worldwide Work of the living Christ, and the perspective of the first and second commissions Christ has given to us.

I took Mr. Les McCullough with me, as you may know, and Mr. Lyle Christopherson, who has been a wonderful friend and companion on several trips in the past. Originally, I was going only to Jerusalem, and straight back to be with my family at Orr, and then back to HQ. But at the same moments I was planning that trip, Mr. Abraham George was brought back to HQ (of necessity -- visa and family considerations) and Mr. Dart and I had a talk with him. I could not decide upon the location of the Indian offices, nor the extent of those offices and staff on secondhand information, and with India such a huge blank spot in my mind. There were many reasons why New Delhi should be chosen -- and seemingly more reasons why Bombay should be. Since it was only a few more hours, nonstop, on to Bombay -- and Mr. Dart would be in the vicinity (I had to send him again to South Africa, to help effect the transfer of Mr. Williams back to Headquarters, and onto the faculty -- and Mr. Bob Fahey from Melbourne to Johannesburg). That turned out to be ideal; I would have the present Deputy Director of the Foreign Work, and my former assistant in the Foreign Work, Mr. McCullough, who has also taken other trips when in that capacity, to help make the decisions.

I found it was easily as simple to continue on -- going the remainder of the way around the world -- as it was to double back from Bombay. Also, since I had never done such a thing -- and had never seen that part of earth lying between Tokyo and Jerusalem (and that's a LOT OF REAL ESTATE!) -- and because of the considerations of the radio and telecast; not only on-the-spot broadcasting, but the experience of the trip for later use, I decided to go all the way.

I have traveled much. Not near so much as others in the work -- but a great deal, nevertheless. Traveling, now, has no attraction for me -- is only an unwanted

Chore. Not only does it disrupt my already disrupted family routine, but it takes me away from the daily routines of broadcasting and television (I always have to do several -- such as very recently when had to do five TV programs in four days -- ahead of time if leaving HQ) and routines of exercise.

And sure enough, this last trip proved to be a combination of terrific education and good broadcasting opportunities -- and sickness.

After flying from New York to Tel Aviv, with brief fuel stop in Paris, we stayed the first night with the Dicks, and then Mr. McCullough, Mr. Christopherson and I took Randy Dick along and drove down to Eilat, past the southern end of the Dead Sea, along an unbelievably desolate, parched salt plain and desert. We arrived in early evening -- checked into the "Queen of Sheba" hotel, and went to bed. That night I was awakened by terrible stomach cramps and dysentery. Then, for all the next day and for days following, I was about as sick as I have ever been. Intending to broadcast, I couldn't really talk -- vomiting repeatedly (couldn't hold even water down) had so irritated my voice apparatus I could only rasp a few words. I asked Mr. McCullough to anoint me -- and began improving -- but even though the worst seemed to be over, I still had sharp, painful stomach cramps and diarrhea for several days.

After a long, weary trip back to Jerusalem, where we were to meet my father, and those who had come to Jerusalem with him (Mr. Rader, Mr. Hunting, and the Neffs), I went to bed. That was Friday. I ended up missing both the Bible study and Sabbath services. Woke up Sabbath morning at 11:30 a.m.! Thought the house sounded quiet, and found Lyle had stayed behind with me. I told myself I might try making it to Sabbath services at the YMCA -- since I still had two hours! Then Lyle told me the services should be about over! The YMCA could only clear a morning time -- and I had slept through the Sabbath services! Still hadn't seen my father! Within about 45 minutes, the Darts, Dicks, etc., began arriving, and soon my father came in. I was pretty shaky -- weak, stomach aching, raw voice, and just sorta "dragged through a knothole backward" looking. At least, I was firming up my stomach muscles! So much for my case of "Pharaoh's Revenge!" I traced it down to the "Oriental hors d'oeuvres" at the Intercontinental Hotel, which, even though now managed by the Jews, still employs the same Arab staff it had prior to the June War of 1967. What those fish pastes and cold fish slices did to my stomach shouldn't happen to the streets of Bombay! Now -- it's funny. Then, even my feet and legs would cramp just from straining with the dry heaves! Sorry it sounds so crude -- but that's just what it was!

I made it over to the Cliff Hotel with my father and others for a brief chat with a group of the students at the "dig," and then we drove down the mountains that late afternoon (about 5:30) to catch the TWA flight to Bombay.

Stomach rumbling -- we arrived in Bombay airport (which is about like some of the cruder ones in Central America, though nowhere near so "clean") in the pitch black early-morning hours. After checking through the pigsty they called customs -- we struggled through the sticky humidity (monsoon season) to a waiting van, after meeting

Abraham George and Mr. Kulaisingam (father of Dr. Grace Clements of Ambassador College, Bricket Wood), and began the drive to our hotel. This, in itself, was a sickening experience. Smells like long neglected outhouses -- and, even though pitch dark, and the lights of the van on, we saw people, people, people -- wandering along the roads; cattle sleeping in the middle of the streets, eerie glimpses as when turning corners our lights would shine inside little ramshackle huts to see the dim, white rags over some sleeping person on the mud floor. I had never in my life seen such wretchedness, such utter poverty -- such ghastly, death-like scenes. It was literally so spiritually depressing it was like a nightmare -- like being for a moment in some scene from Dante's "Inferno."

We arrived at the hotel -- out away from the "city" in a boggy, dripping area of fetid, lichen-covered buildings, tin, cardboard and rag shacks, thick, overgrown lots of weeds, jumbled sticks, bricks, cans and rags, and sleeping people -- on the streets, in little huts, lying on a wood pallet in front of tiny cardboard and wood box-like shacks, and insolent, munching cows. The hotel, "Sun 'n Sand" belies its pretentious name. It should have been called "Darkness 'n Mud" -- if you get the picture.

But the rooms were "nice" for that part of the world. Air conditioned -- which means a whistling cold breeze you can't adjust, and the signs plead for you to please leave it on during the monsoons so the furniture won't decay, and the wallpaper won't peel off because of the terrible dampness that clings to everything like a sticky resin.

But, out of the wretched stop (I ate the sum total of two tiny pickings along the outer edges of a "steak" (in reality the muscle from the foreleg -- tougher'n last-year's tennis shoes) and about four (in two or three different mornings) hard-boiled eggs which, I assume, were "untouched by human hands." The chickens I was a little suspicious of -- but trusted, at this point, an unwashed hen further than an Indian hotel servant.

At least, I did two radio programs, including a running commentary of sights and sounds in a wild taxi ride into Bombay. We had meetings with a solicitor, and arranged for beginning overtures to the Indian government for legal recognition as an agency there, and called on Reader's Digest. (Their offices, on an unimaginably filthy street in one of the many "newer" buildings, were worse by far than some of our temporary arrangements in the Mayfair basement used to be!)

India really instilled in me a deeper understanding of what Christ meant when He said it wasn't fitting to take the children's meat and give it to the dogs. The Samaritan woman talked of the crumbs from the table -- and that's precisely where India seems to fit where the worldwide efforts of God's Work for this are concerned.

Knowing, now, that the sleaziest flop house in New Orleans must be at least as fine as over half the doctors' offices in Bombay. I am in nowhere NEAR so big a hurry to establish fine offices there -- purchase expensive machinery, and hire a staff, just to speed the literature to the Indian people by a few weeks earlier than presently. There is NO SUCH THING IN INDIA as literature such as we print -- of that QUALITY -- EVEN FOR SALE! The six weeks' delay is not all that bad -- and, when coming from

an outside source, the Indian people expect a delay. Hence, we are not moving yet to really "establish an office" there, but are continuing with having Mr. Kulaisingham and Mr. George merely forward the mail to Bricket Wood, and mailing the PT's and booklets on the new British postal rates (cheaper!) from there. Six weeks delay or no!

Originally, I was to have gone on to New Delhi. But frankly, I was not only physically sick, but "spirit sick" because of the unbelievable depression, mentally, from the things I was seeing and smelling in that ghoulish environment. I knew I couldn't (and I didn't need to) make a decision right then about the office anyhow, and Mr. Dart and I had discussed, at some length, our desire to have a British or American in charge there. We began talking about Richard Frankel. By the time you receive this letter, I should have concluded talks with him at HQ, and come to some decision about his future use there. Jim Jensen (one of our cinematographers for the TV programs) was in Jerusalem shooting for the documentary we're doing, and so Mr. Smith sent him some expense from the media budget for a trip with us to India. I hated to do it -- but we sent him on to New Delhi, Benares, and Calcutta, to get footage for use on the TV, and perhaps in the colleges. Benares, you may realize, is where the ceremonial "Ghats" are located, where they burn the bodies -- people go there from all over India to die -- and where the many "holy places" are -- the people bathe in their "sacred river" in the same place where human excrement and human ashes alike float by.

We fled. Next stop was Bangkok -- and, as many others must also have noticed, the contrasts between Bangkok and India are shocking. The Orientals are simply more industrious, neater, and CLEANER by nature -- even though Gentile.

Of course, the huge sums of American aid, and military installations and indirect money from those that have flown into Thailand have made many visible impressions. But the hotel was wonderful, the food even more so -- and the trip was looking up for the first time. We only stayed overnight, and then took a Thai International Airways plane for Saigon, and changed planes to Hong Kong.

At our brief stopover at Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon I got two radio programs, including some interviews -- one with a Marine Corps Captain, pilot of the Huey helicopter gunships, wounded five times, wearing the DFC and Air Medal among a four-row span of ribbons. He was intelligent, articulate, and spoke right up with his answers -- made a fine interview for an unusual broadcast. A two hour stopover in a busy airport, and two radio programs. I began to feel like I was accomplishing something.

On to Hong Kong, and the usual mild surprise (seen too many pictures and heard too many descriptions and seen too many other cities like it to be more than mildly surprised, I guess) at the buildings, commerce, and busy port. Got some fine pictures -- met the Faheys who were stopping over for the purpose enroute first to Jerusalem and then down to their new assignment in South Africa. Like my father warned me, Hong Kong is a shopper's paradise. So -- I got six tailor-made shirts at about half

what they would have cost in the States, and Mr. Dart stocked up on Hong Kong suits. Bought Shirley two strands of 7mm pearls for 120 US dollars. Have no idea what they would cost in the States, but am informed it would be about double that. Had slight stomach twitches. By now, my yellow pallor and "peaked" look had become the barometer of the trip. But at least, I was still firming up my stomach muscles from time to time, and losing a little weight -- which I didn't need to do all that badly.

Next stop was over the Sabbath and two more broadcasts in Tokyo -- where I made a couple of phone calls to Nitto Agency, and to the Executive Vice-President of the Soka Gakkai (new nationalistic-Buddhist religion) for a few minutes each but didn't think it important enough to remain in Japan for a business day. We arrived late Friday evening, and left Sunday evening. Arrived in Honolulu on Sunday morning! I'm sure you can all figure that one out.

Then, after overnight in Honolulu -- and in spite of the Pan Am strike (counted more than TWENTY big 707's with Pan Am paint standing idle in Honolulu!) we took a United stretch DC-8 to LA, arriving late Monday evening.

Interestingly enough, as I presented my passport to the customs agent in Honolulu, he glanced up and asked, "So you're the one I listen to all the time?" Then, eating breakfast with Mr. Christopherson in the hotel coffee shop the next morning, a man came to my table and asked if I were who I am. I said yes, of course. He said he was a personal assistant to Howard Hughes, on vacation from Las Vegas, and that Howard and he had seen the TV programs, and that Howard has asked him to write in for several pieces of our literature. Interesting. Never forget that, IN SPITE of financial hardships, IF GOD WANTED TO DO IT, He could influence such a man to IMMEDIATELY give to the Work enough money to get us out of any size hurdle. But God doesn't make it all that easy on us, or the members and co-workers. There's no prayer, faith, and character-building patience in sudden gifts of millions. But if God ever wanted to do such a thing, I'm positive He could.

Then, when waiting for baggage in LA, a man walked up and asked if I was one of the men on Channel 5. I took one day to catch up on time change in Pasadena (woke up at the equivalent of 4:00 a.m. Honolulu time, which I wasn't adjusted to anyhow, having come from Tokyo, and felt so rocky could only do paper work and have talks that day). Went to lunch with Mr. Meredith, and Mr. Dart, and tried to catch up on things. Had booklet projects priority meeting with editorial staff, Mr. Wilson and men from Press, and had radio studio run the first of the tapes from Saigon, which I imagine most of you have heard by now. The background noise was terrible. Then, had to do one TV program, rush home to pack between 12:30 and 1:00 and leave for Orr, and reunion with my family. Western was on strike, so had to take United, change planes (2 hour stopover) at Denver and on to Minneapolis arriving just before 10:00 p.m. On the United flight to Denver, they were carrying about three extra crews. A captain, flying as a passenger, walked toward me from the front row, stopped at my aisle seat, extended his hand and said, "Glad to have you aboard." I thought he'd mixed me up

with someone else. Turned out he had watched the TV program many times, and had heard a great deal of radio, too. He rather hesitantly told me he "had no particular religion" but had a strong "personal conviction" but never could find anything in all the churches. I laughed and told him I couldn't either, and that was why I had never joined any. Next morning, as I was rushing to pack, hurry out to the airport in time for a flight to Orr, the phone rang and it was my father!

They had stopped over in Minneapolis for fuel. He had called my home, to find Lyle answering the phone (he stayed over for film developing and processing after trip) and discovered I had come to Minneapolis the night before. Mr. Hunting was with him, for trip to HQ, and then back by here to collect his son, Paul, for return to Bricket Wood. Quite a surprise!

Then on to Orr, and what a blessing! It's great enough just being back in the United States -- just being back with my family. But when I pulled those pearls out of their little bag....

Well, that about does it. This letter has taken me parts of three days -- and I'm now finishing it up on a beautiful Sabbath morning on the lake here, looking forward to a meeting with all the chief teachers of the last three grades of high school of all three Imperials this coming week, the final day of camp and their water show, and then returning to Pasadena for the beginning of another school year. Mr. Al Portune and his family (those at home!) are slowly crossing the country by automobile for the end of camp and to take his son, Mike, back home -- we're expecting them in here within a few more days.

Well, the new PT, GN and TOMORROW'S WORLD were all out when I got back, and the Population Explosion (Famine -- will we starve?) booklet almost ready -- and I started running the programs I had done along the way.

I wish I could go on to give you the really shocking, jolting experience India, Vietnam and Thailand were -- mostly India; but I wanted to at least give you all a brief rundown of the trip -- first time I have ever been around the world, though several of our ministers have -- and perhaps remind you a little of the vastness of the job yet before us. With more than 470 million -- India could be a bottomless pit for the entire wealth of the United States. We, in this Work, could spend millions there and not make a tiny DENT in the vastness of the educational and spiritual job there is to perform. To see insolent cattle eating the vegetables off a hand cart in the street and neither the customers nor the vendor even chasing it away is sickening, to say the least. The experience of buying a Reader's Digest at a newsstand in Thailand and reading our own big, full-color, two-page ad was thrilling. Meeting a man from Melbourne in Hong Kong enroute to South Africa -- that's the kind of thing that makes you aware of God's Work as a truly WORLDWIDE effort -- GLOBAL and HUGE in scope -- and not just local.

Don't EVER make the mistake of comparing "phylacteries" in a local area -- thinking of true spirituality is equated with the tremble-chinned "pillow stitchers" of the fake religions of this world, and begin comparing among yourselves about who is more "spiritual" than the other. When all is said and done -- NOT ONE of us is anywhere.

NEAR as "spiritual" as we TRULY OUGHT TO BE -- I mean NOT ONE.

I take the time to write this letter because I feel it is needed. I know how difficult it would be for anyone else to "report" on a trip -- and I also know how easily "trips" can be misunderstood and misinterpreted by people. Forget the glamour. It doesn't exist. But the stomach-clutching vomit sessions do -- and the tiredness, loneliness, and soul-sick feelings from the sights all around you -- they exist.

Somehow, God is involving us in something even we cannot fully appreciate in Jerusalem -- and we don't KNOW where it will really lead. Somehow, God is beginning to really make His Work; His Colleges and His Worldwide Educational Program KNOWN to the world more than ever, now. And never forget -- ONE ISSUE of Time, Newsweek, Life or Look could make this Work either IMPORTANT in the world's eyes, or a stench in the nostrils of all. We may be very close to THAT kind of persecution, too.

Well -- I should quit now, and finish my sermon preparation for all these young people. (Including a lot of your own sons and daughters!)

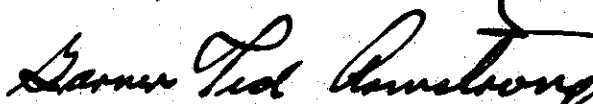
So, keep busy in the "field" -- and never lose sight of the FIRST and MOST IMPORTANT commission God has given us! Remember the feeding of the flock is a life-and-death task; one of great importance -- but remember too the WORLDWIDE preaching of the Gospel (and those booklets like WONDERFUL WORLD TOMORROW and U.S. AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY being advertised in India and Thailand and around the world are POWERFUL PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL!) is even MORE important!

Keep your people AWARE of the worldwide Work. Of Headquarters, and all the Colleges; of Imperial and the SEP -- and of all the OTHER Churches too. Don't allow any of them to begin looking introspectively into the purely LOCAL problems so much they lose sight of the BIG WORK being done -- that which must yet be accomplished.

I write, too, because I don't want to take occasion to write only when there is need for rejoinders or rebuke. Too many of us find ourselves in jobs where correction is about all we dispense -- and that's bad, even for us.

Thanks for your prayers for us -- and for those in the future! Love to all of you, and your families -- and all the sweet little babies I keep reading about in the ministerial letters! We're looking forward to some wonderful reunions at the Feast sites -- all six of them!

In Jesus Christ's Work,



Garner Ted Armstrong

