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HOW CHRIST GIVES CHURCH its DOCTRINES

by Herbert W. Armstrong

I had not realized it before, but I find that somehow there seems to have been a supposition among some--more or less, I do not know to what extent--in the Ministry to assume that Church DOCTRINE is set by the Church.

This is MOST IMPORTANT--for God commands through the Apostle Paul that in the Church we must ALL SPEAK THE SAME THINGS, that there be no divisions among us.

It ought to be obvious that for ABSOLUTE DOCTRINAL UNITY, the doctrines, practices, customs should be PUT INTO the Church by Jesus Christ, the living HEAD of the Church.

It is apparent that, in the ministry, we were NOT all speaking the same thing--or at least in harmony and of one mind doctrinally.

I quote from a letter from Dr. Robert Kuhn. "After much consideration, I feel that it is proper that I should personally take full responsibility for the Systematic Theology Project. I was the primary participant and therefore must accept full responsibility for all its aspects, . . . Mr. Armstrong, please believe what I wanted to do. My sole desire has always been to support you and help the Church doing God's Work. The circumstances surrounding the Systematic Theology Project were exceedingly complex from its inception as an effort to thwart the ministerial dissention and silence the doctrinal critics in 1974 to the writing of the papers (and the editing) during the time of your illness in late 1977. Throughout my personal objective was always to simply, powerfully and wholeheartedly uphold Church doctrine in the most effective manner. However I failed in this, I come before you, the Ministry and the Church to ask forgiveness."

I gather from Dr. Kuhn's letter that it was assumed that the doctrines of the Church are those agreed on by a group of ministers at Headquarters.

His letter continues, "My only goal in coordinating the project was to bring doctrinal consistency, stability and unity to the Ministry and the Church during a very traumatic and protracted period."

That brings me to say this:

1) The very fact that such a project was contemplated, planned, or being worked on, was deliberately kept from me by my son--and many top-ranking ministers were demoted, or shanghaied away from Pasadena, and threatened with termination of their ministry if they contacted me in any way.

As God is my witness, I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT any such project being produced. I knew absolutely nothing about it--or that there was such a project--or what it contained--until some months after it had been handed out to the Ministry at the January Conference. Prior to the Conference I asked my son Garner Ted point blank if any doctrinal matters were to be discussed in any way--as they had been the year before after I had been maneuvered to fly to Europe the afternoon of the opening day, after having addressed the Conference at its opening morning session. My son assured me nothing of a doctrinal nature would in any way be brought up. But it was brought up, and I find now that hours were spent in discussing and explaining doctrines in this "STP".

Now I am told by Dr. Kuhn that the whole project was intended to bring the Ministry into harmony and unity (so all would speak the same thing). And BY WHAT METHOD?

That is the crux of the matter! The entire mistake was in, apparently, assuming that what a group of ministers at Headquarters, under my son, could determine Church doctrine, and if necessary to satisfy certain ones who did not want to accept what had been Church doctrine all along, to COMPROMISE, by WATERING DOWN God's Truth!

Dear Fellow Ministers, this is the Church OF GOD, with Jesus Christ its LIVING Head--not the church of MEN, bargaining, discussing, compromising, altering and watering down doctrines to please MEN!

Perhaps I myself should take part of the blame for not sooner having made CLEAR AND PLAIN precicely H O W God put His Truth and doctrines into His Church. I simply did not realize that this was not understood.

Up until this conspiracy was done and an attempt to alter certain doctrines to please certain ministers, HOW DID God put His doctrines, beliefs, customs and practices into His Church? ANSWER: THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CHOSEN APOSTLE!

Now was that GOD's WAY? Let the Word of God tell us. And incidentally, let me first interject here, if any minister does not wholeheartedly agree with any doctrine, the solution is not to COMPROMISE or WATER DOWN--but to BE SURE we have what JESUS CHRIST has put into the Church. The solution, then, is for any such minister to come to Pasadena--or Tucson if I am there at that time--and prayerfully and sincerely go over it together. If your mind is as open as is mine, we will both come to the same mind--the mind of CHRIST! I will never compromise with God's Truth--but my mind will always be open to PROOF of what is that truth. I have proved that if, being human myself, I have been wrong on a point, I WILL CHANGE TO THE TRUTH!

Peter and Paul, and the other original Apostles were also human and subject to mistakes. Yet the Church received ALL its doctrines, teachings, and practices THROUGH THOSE APOSTLES! THERE IS NOT ONE EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCH RECEIVING ITS BELIEFS ANY OTHER WAY!

Jesus Christ DID NOT APPOINT A DOCTRINAL COMMITTEE of MEN or ministers to manufacture and give the Church doctrine! Jesus Christ taught Peter and the original twelve IN PERSON, the same Christ taught Paul IN PERSON! Christ is the PERSONAL Word of God. The Bible is that same Word IN WRITING!

I followed Paul's example.

And I can say, with him, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . But when it pleased God, who. . . called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither . . ." went I to a Biblical Seminary, but I went into night-and-day study of the Word of God, mostly on my knees. (Galations 1:11-17).

The Apostle Paul says, verse 17, that instead of going to other MEN, he went into Arabia. Apparently Jesus Christ, IN PERSON, manifested Himself and taught Paul there. For Paul said later, ". . . Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord. . .?" (I Cor. 9:1). ". . . And that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:4-6,8).

The twelve original Apostles received their teaching direct from Jesus IN PERSON. The Apostle Paul spent some three years in Arabia, and apparently that was the time when he saw JESUS IN PERSON, and was taught directly by Jesus Christ. But as Jesus is the Word in Person, so the Bible is the Word of God IN PRINT.

Now back to Galations 1; "Then after three years (in Arabia) I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's Brother" (Gal. 1:18-19). Continue on, "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Baranabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (to the Gentiles) was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision (Israel) was unto Peter; For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:1-8).

The word "apostle" means "one sent forth."

The meaning here is unmistakable--as Peter was the chief Apostle to Israel and Judah, so Paul was chief Apostle to the Gentiles.

Nevertheless, when All of the Scriptures on the subject are put together, it becomes certain that Peter, in fact, was the over-all chief Apostle.

The New Testament Church of God received all its teachings, practices, customs, FROM THE APOSTLES, with Peter chief over all the others.

I know well, that, in view of Roman Catholic teachings regarding Peter being the first pope, this statement will be challenged by many--but it is TRUE, nevertheless!

Peter did have primacy as chief Apostle! I shall amply prove that. YET PETER WAS NOT A POPE! There is a vast DIFFERENCE!

Remember, an Apostle is "ONE SENT FORTH WITH THE GOSPEL". The Roman Catholic pope sits permanently, unless, as some few have done, he takes a trip to some other place--not as carrying the Gospel, but as a POLITICAL HEAD OF STATE.

Yet the Apostles were the teachers, who instilled in the Church the BELIEFS, TEACHINGS, PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS of the Church. And all members of the Church were required by God to BELIEVE, and SPEAK THE SAME THING!

In the Church at Corinth, Paul began his letter, INSPIRED as part of GOD'S WORD, by saying, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (I Cor. 1:10).

Paul's letter to the Corinthians was CORRECTIVE, as were his letters to other churches, and he was inspired to speak in the name of and AUTHORITY of Jesus Christ. For, he said, (verses 11-12), ". . . that there are contentions among you." "... that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." THEY WERE BEGINNING TO FOLLOW INDIVIDUAL LEADERS. They supposed those leaders differed in their teaching, though in fact those mentioned did all speak and teach THE SAME THING as CHRIST had instructed.

SOURCE of Church Beliefs

Let's GET THIS STRAIGHT; once and for all! The SOURCE of the beliefs, teachings, customs and practices in the Church of God is GOD HIMSELF! Not any man. Jesus said, "I have spoken nothing of myself,"--the FATHER had instructed Him! Jesus, in turn, taught His Apostles in Person!

THERE WAS NO DOCTRINAL BOARD! The teachings of the Church did not come from a COUNCIL of ministers and/or lay members, who voted on what to believe.

Right here, SOME are going to ask, "WHAT ABOUT ACTS 15? Wasn't that the first Church Council at Jerusalem, to settle points of doctrine? THE ANSWER IS NO! And I intend to devote enough space in this article to clear up that point!

So far, I have shown you from Galatians 1 and 2 that Peter was the chief Apostle to the House of Israel, and Paul to the Gentiles. Now I will show you that Peter actually had PRIMACY OVER ALL.

At the very founding of the New Testament Church of God, it was PETER who stood up and explained what had occurred--preaching the first sermon in the Church that led to 3,000 converts (Acts 2:14-39).

A day or two later, the number became 5,000. It was Peter who said to the cripple, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). It was PETER who preached the sermon to the crowd thus attracted that converted 2,000 more.

Next came the incident of Ananias and Saphira, stealing and lying. It was PETER who spoke and caused them to drop dead.

Next, when signs and wonders were performed by the Apostles. It was PETER'S SHADOW, as he passed by, that healed the sick.

Next, the Apostles were brought before the high priest and the council, and the spokesman for the Apostles was PETER, who said, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

Coming to Acts 8, when Philip, then a deacon, went to Samaria, and when the people believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, they were baptized. It was Peter and John who went down to Samaria, laid hands on the newly baptized (Gentiles) and prayed for the Holy Spirit to be given to them. This is the first example of the Church of God custom of laying hands on the baptized for receiving the Holy Spirit--and Peter was the leader, for when Simon the sorcerer tried to buy an apostleship with money, it was PETER who said to him (the first pope), "Thy money perish with thee. . . for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." He was the pater or peter--papal--pope of the Babylonian Mystery religion. Paul cites (II Thes. 2:7) "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." That religion, having without authority appropriated the name "Christianity" is named, in Revelation 17:5, "MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT."

Is it not ironic that the one who rebuked and condemned the first pope was Cephas, whom Christ had called PETER?

But continue on.

We come to Acts 10. Although Paul was later to be made an Apostle to the Gentiles, the time had come to first open salvation to the Gentiles officially. And this was done by PETER, not Paul. It was Peter whom God sent to the house of the Gentile Cornelius, to teach him. It was Peter who convinced the others at Jerusalem that God had opened salvation to the Gentiles. As in, Acts 11.

UNDERSTAND THIS about Peter. He WAS NOT A PROUD RULING POPE. He was a humble man, strong in Christ's Gospel and faith, but he did not try to lord it over others, or always take the top seat, unless his position required. He was HUMAN, still, though since the day of Pentecost he had the Holy Spirit. When Peter came to Antioch, more than 14 years after founding of the Church, his human nature showed when he withdrew from the Gentiles, after some Jewish converts arrived from Jerusalem. Paul rebuked Peter publicly for this. But then, we might well remember that Paul was also human. This event occurred in the chief Gentile Church, and Paul was a little nettled at seeing Peter withdraw from eating with Gentiles because some had arrived from Jerusalem. This incident reflects the humanity of both Peter and Paul--and demonstrates, also, that Peter was not a pope, else Paul would never have dared rebuked him.

Now we come to that crucial 15th chapter of Acts.

Few in God's Church have fully understood this chapter. I shall go into sufficient detail to MAKE IT CLEAR!

Notice, verse 1: "Certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Who were these men? Not apostles, or they would have been named.

Right here MARK WELL THIS POINT: GOD PUT HIS TRUTH INTO HIS CHURCH THROUGH CHRIST AND THROUGH THE APOSTLES! These men were not apostles. What they taught was NOT FROM JESUS!

The Apostle Paul KNEW WELL that God gave His Church its teachings only through Christ and the Apostles. Immediately Paul withstood these unauthorized "teachers".

Verse 2: "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they (probably the local members, not fully realizing that Paul, being Apostle to the Gentiles, had authority to settle it) determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

These men from Judaea were undoubtedly Jewish Christians who had not received authentic teaching through Apostles--nor did they recognize Paul's authority as an Apostle, or they would not have entered into such disputation with him.

Undoubtedly, being Jewish converts, without full Apostolic teaching, they looked on the Church as merely an extension of Judaism. Incidentally, the Judaism of that time WAS NOT Mosaic teaching. But after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the only organized Jewish religion was among the descendants of the contingent of Jews sent back to Jerusalem from Persian captivity (see Ezra 1:1-3) 70 years after the destruction of Solomon's temple, to build the second temple--to which Jesus later came. After Ezra and Nehemiah, the rabbis gradually made a considerable change in the Old Covenant religion given Israel by Moses.

Their Israelite ancestors had always wanted to be more like the world around them. In I Samuel 8 you will read of how they wanted a king, and government more like the other nations of the world. Now the WORLD, except for Israel, which was especially called by God, was CUT OFF from God. God, in effect, had said to Adam, "You have rejected me and my Government. Therefore, I SENTENCE you to 6,000 years of being cut off from me. GO, form your own religions, your own governments, your own society and civilization." That applied to all except those God specially called. God called Abraham, Moses, Abraham's descendants the Israelites--but even the Israelites wanted to be like the worldly nations CUT OFF from God. Remember, all those centuries and millenniums, the Chinese, Japanese, people of India, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Roman Empire, knew little or nothing about GOD. They all had their own religions, and most were derived, with some changes, from that established by Semiramis, the mother-wife of Nimrod (Gen. 10).

Now these pagan religions--of Egypt, Greece, Babylon, Rome, had known nothing of God's GRACE--unmerited, underserved PARDON, forgiveness of past sins on repentance. Instead, their religions had adopted a system of self-inflicted punishment, ordeal or torture, to justify past sins.

Moses had been used of God to give Israel certain laws. First, there was the over-all spiritual law of LOVE, or the Ten Commandments--although Israel without the Holy Spirit could keep that law only in the strictness of the letter (in the New Testament it must be according to the Spirit--or the obvious intent). This is called in the Bible the Law of God. Then, through Moses, God gave them the "law of Moses"--a sacrificial law of animal sacrifices, which could not justify sin, but were a reminder of sin, and was a physical substitute for the sacrifice of Christ. When Christ died on the cross, animal sacrifices ceased.

There also was a ceremonial law--of physical rituals--carnal ordinances, meat and drink offerings, etc.--to teach them the HABIT of obedience--things to do repeatedly morning, noon, and night. The law of rituals, including circumcision, was PHYSICAL, and a substitute until the Holy Spirit should be given, to teach them the HABIT of obedience.

In Galatians 3:19, this law was ADDED, because of transgressions. That is, transgressions of the spiritual LAW. In Galatians 3:24, this ritual law is called a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." In Romans and Galatians, the term "works of the law" always refers to these PHYSICAL laws, which were temporary until Christ. Sometimes the single word "works" means "good works," in accord with the Spiritual Law, and sometimes the "works of the law" when mentioned in the context will for brevity speak of just "the law," but the context will make it plain the subject is the RITUALS. The Greek for "works" of the law is ergon, which means physical effort.

Besides these temporary physical rituals, and sacrifices, God gave them through Moses statutes and judgments--the CIVIL LAWS of their nation. They were not necessarily temporary, or substitutional, but were to last as long as the NATIONAL GOVERNMENT was administered over the nation Israel.

Now the rabbis, after Ezra and Nehemiah, added some 65 "do's and don'ts", even to the keeping of the Sabbath. They adopted the PAGAN PENANCE--self inflicted punishment--and construed the physical rituals as a means of justification of past sins. THIS WAS JUDAISM--something really quite different from the religion of Moses.

Now back to Acts 15.

These Jews who had come down to Antioch still thought this system of PENANCE was still in effect. In Galatians 5:3, Paul shows that if a man was circumcised as a legal ritual, he became a debtor to do the WHOLE RITUAL LAW--and the context is speaking of the RITUAL law, thought this verse does not use "works of the law".

Paul was quite willing to take this to Jerusalem, BECAUSE PETER WAS THERE AT THE TIME.

This visit of Paul to Jerusalem is undoubtedly the one mentioned in Galatians 2. Apparently, according to Galatians 2:9, the only Apostles at Jerusalem at that time were Peter, James and John.

But in Acts 15:4, it is stated: "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders. . ."

Then, verse 6, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." All ordained ministers are called "elders" in the Bible. This means the lay members were excluded, but the apostles and ordained ministers, ranked lower than the apostles, came together in this Council.

Now we see, that even these elders were not clear on this matter of circumcision. For, verse 7: "And when there had been much disputing, PETER rose up" and settled the matter!

Continue, verse 7-11: ". . . PETER rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe, and God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the GRACE (not ritual penance) of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Verse 12: "Then all the multitude kept silence." PETER had settled the question!

Right here, NOTE CAREFULLY! Peter was an Apostle--ONE SENT FORTH proclaiming the Gospel, not a resident Pastor of a church. James was Pastor of the Jerusalem Church at the time, though also an apostle. Therefore James acted as chairman of the meeting--even though PETER gave the DECISION. As a matter of protocol, as chairman (as we would call it today), we come now to verse 13.

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me. Simeon (Peter) hath declared..." in other words, acting as chairman of the meeting, James in effect started by saying "PETER has declared"--Peter has settled it... "how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Again, affirming Peter's primacy--for when God decided to open salvation to the Gentiles--to CALL some of them to salvation, whereas heretofore God had called only Israelites (and even them NOT to salvation, except the prophets)--when God opened salvation to the Gentiles, He used Peter to do it! Now continue James' speech:

"And to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

James was quoting from Amos 9:11-12.

NOTE THIS! The Church of God is built on the FOUNDATION of the Apostles and the Prophets--Old Testament Prophets as well as the

VERY FEW prophets of the New Testament. And James was here quoting from the prophet Amos, to add his own approval to Peter's DECISION. James is not making the decision--he is making official Peter's decision!

Continue: "Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." (Verses 19-20). Pollutions of idols was related to idolatry, and idolatry and fornication were violations of the SPIRITUAL law, eternally binding. Eating blood or things strangled was NO PART of the ceremonial law, but a law of health which was not substitutionary.

OBSERVE SPECIALLY: This was not a matter, as did happen at Pasadena, of one of lower rank appointed by an Apostle, while the Apostle was in another part of the world, calling together a conference of ministers of various ranks--all under that of Apostle--and determining, or changing doctrine--watering down God's TRUTH--and sending it out, as the STP was, claiming falsely and without authority that it was an authoritative doctrinal pronouncement!

In this case, it was PETER, chief Apostle, who set the decision. The letter they then sent to the Church at Antioch specified that this decision was inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT. PETER set it, James, local Pastor acting as chairman of the meeting, confirmed Peter's decision, making it OFFICIAL, inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT.

Jesus Gave Peter Primacy

In all these successive instances, I have shown you, step by step, that Peter was LEADER of the Apostles--and that the Church received its teachings and doctrines FROM THE APOSTLES!

But God has always worked primarily through ONE MAN at a time--as Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then Joseph--later Moses, then Joshua, later Samuel, then David--and, in the New Testament Church, PETER. But Peter was an Apostle--one sent forth proclaiming the Message--not a resident pope over a political hierarchy.

Now notice how JESUS gave Peter primacy over Apostles:

Jesus had asked His Apostles-to-be whom they said Jesus really was. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said unto him"--UNTO PETER: "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee"--UNTO PETER--"That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto THEE"--PETER, not the Church--"the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou"--PETER--"shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou"--PETER--"shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

There has been much discussion at Pasadena between certain ministers of lower than Apostle rank, as to the CHURCH binding and loosing.

So now let it be MADE OFFICIAL--by Christ's present-day Apostle--that this binding and loosing PLAINLY, CLEARLY, was given to Christ's chief APOSTLE--not to lower-rank ministers ordained by his authority--not by the CHURCH as a body--but by the APOSTLE!

When men who held office under the Apostle, and by his appointment or approval, took it into their own hands, in his absence--stealthily KEEPING IT FROM HIM--act to water down God's TRUTH, alter His doctrines, assume unauthorized authority, then the living CHRIST moves His Apostle to ACT SWIFTLY, to PUT OUT the prime mover in this conspiracy, and under Christ, set God's Church and Work BACK ON GOD'S TRACK!

PRAISE THE ETERNAL GOD! he has NOT left nor forsaken HIS CHURCH! Jesus Christ still REIGNS SUPREME in God's Church, as He shall, very soon, reign over all the earth!

Many harmful errors in the "STP" still remain to be PUT STRAIGHT--and it shall be done by JESUS CHRIST, through His Apostle, as rapidly as is humanly possible!

JESUS CHRIST is the living HEAD of this Church! HE built it through His Apostle. And He, CHRIST, still rules SUPREME in the one and only area on earth where the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is being administered today!

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RUMORS AND THEIR MONGERS

by Robert E. Fahey

Talk about rumor is usually too simplistic. Communication people know that rumor can be a good sign in that it shows interest. Somebody CARES about the person being discussed. His actions are important and significant.

People talk about what is of interest to them. We have given our lives to this Work. We are concerned about every facet of its operations. We CARE about the triumphs and the troubles. We discuss them both. We want to know particularly about the leadership--what they are doing, thinking, planning or even dreading. Because those activities will affect the Work and US. So we are concerned--we want to know. That is good!

We do not discuss what is of no interest to us. A few years ago, you could not get away from news about Jackie Kennedy. She complained about her lack of privacy. And if you saw the photos I did-- with good reason. Now she has the privacy she wanted, but she may not be happy with that either. The public is saying in effect, "We don't care about how rich she is, her marriage and divorce plans nor where and how she sunbathes. We have largely lost interest in Jackie."

If our hearts (and treasure) are in the Work, we will surely talk about it. And so we should. The problem of course, is HOW we

talk about it. As Mr. Armstrong has said about everything from shotguns to sex, it is not the thing, but the misuse of the thing that is wrong.

And talking about the Work and the people in it has been misused. Badly.

Why?

Firstly, we must remember the old marketplace principle of supply and demand. If demand for news exceeds the supply in normal channels, interested parties begin to rely on each other for information. So any barriers that hinder the rapid dissemination of news such as censorship (in a government or a boardroom) or physical barriers arising in catastrophies (earthquakes, war, etc.) encourage rumors.

Investigators, in studying rumors, have found that people deprived of authoritative news tend to speculate on what is happening. Either individually or with the help of other interested parties, they pool what bits of information they have to form reasonable estimates of the whole story. A significant change in the environment that remains unaccounted for feels incomplete. Like hearing the opening few notes of the Blue Danube without the mentally satisfying tum-tum tum-tums. Or waiting for the other shoe to drop. This produces the the almost irresistible urge to fill in the missing portions -- from one's own imagination. The results of this attempt to complete the elipsis are obviously suspect. People who do not have the perspective of one deprived of authoritative news, but do have the facts are usually amazed at the results of this speculative exercise. Amazed is too weak a word -- dumbfounded and aghast better describes it.

There are other reasons. Some of which we are all familiar with. Events are discussed for purely entertainment value. Just to keep life and the conversation interesting. The most colorful rumor of that type was the "Paul McCartney is dead" one of 1969. It involved playing records backwards and license numbers of parked cars on album jackets. The intrigue and sense of conspiracy was exhilarating -- and basically harmless.

For us in the Church, the difficulty is that these things have a tendency to go too far. "In the multitude of words there wants not sin; but he that refrains his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19). The problem is usually with that action word, refrain. For the "foolish things of the world" refraining ain't easy. Amen. Yea, verily.

Another commonly known reason is to bestow STATUS on the teller. Someone may be pleased to show us they are informed. But we should always be aware that the specialists that study these things tell us that people who give us information outside of official channels usually distort the news by distilling it (leveling in rumor argot) because of 1) time considerations (long distance calls are costly), or 2) the conversation is on a tack that only involves the news in part (on a tangent) or, 3) the bits that support the tellers own opinion about why something happened are highlighted while those that conflict are diminished.

Shaky at best.

It is an ego trip for some to know something others don't. Of course, if those around them are unaware of their ignorance, the joy of knowing is diminished. So, a bit of baiting is called for. The techniques vary from silly to stupid -- they are never sophisticated. This "bait" becomes the whole morsel to the one that receives it; unless he can pump more out. But if not, that will have to be his meal for that day. He will add that piece to others from different sources in an attempt to form a more complete picture. In doing so, he will share his bit (a kind of barter) in discussions with others. The more "others" the better. Additional pieces of information are added or discarded as seems best.

Both the baiter and the baited are in the wrong. Together they create rumor and spread it. All to satisfy both their quests for self-esteem (in their search for meaningful hints about the future). Christ's prophecy that "he that exalts himself shall be abased" seems to have been overlooked in their quest for meaningful hints about the future. Their goal is to be exalted in the eyes of those around them. That may be their only reward.

Or, it may not. When the blind lead the blind in this way, it is not only they that fall into the ditch. Hundreds may fall with them, because the conclusions they arrive at and spread usually have an ugliness and a viciousness about them that could make a "little one" stumble. If that happens, another reward may be the promised millstone.

People do appear to have an ungodly fascination with the negative and ignoble. The worse the rumor, the faster it travels. Presumably more want to hear it and tell it.

That is not God's way at all. When David was driven from Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion, he was eager for news. When he was told Ahimaaz was running he said, "He is a good man and comes with good news" (2 Sam. 18). That may seem like a shallow observation but it is preserved in God's Word for our learning. David knew that Zadok's son liked to deliver good news. Unlike 98% of rumor passers, he hated to give bad news. If Ahimaaz was running that hard, he had to have good news. To David, that made him a good man. Some commentaries state that Ahimaaz did not know of Absalom's death which was bad news for David. They assume the best. Others feel he did. That may reflect the commentaries fascination with the unbeautiful. Either way, Ahimaaz was eager to tell the King his throne was restored. That was good news.

Ahimaaz, like a tree, is still known by his fruits--in this case, the words that came from his mouth. Christ, about to be given the same throne, said "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6).

To God, builders and suppliers of ugly rumors reveal more about themselves than they do about the truth of the people and events they seek to report. He said He will have a little chat with them about it in the future (Matt. 12:36).

Talking about the Work has been misused for still another reason. This is a result of the age in which we live. It has been called the age of cynicism. So many cover-ups have been uncovered, so many "facts" have been proved fraudulent, so many stories demonstrated to be specious, that we of this age are forced to view everything with doubt and disbelief. There is no innocence; the Lennon sisters are no more. All that is left is the nihilistic Nancy Sinatra look. "Watch out for the boots. They are gonna walk all over you."

But that outlook does not belong in the Church. If it is, we are not overcoming the world, it is overcoming us. We would be accepting the attitudes of a dying society instead of the way of God that leads to LIFE. If we infer that church leadership is suspect or evil, that they willingly deceive us and are selfishly motivated, we are actually saying that Christ is not ruling His Church as He should.

When Christ wanted to reveal Himself to John in Rev. 1, He could have used anyone of several scenes to do so. On the right hand of the Father. A vision ahead to the time of the Kingdom. But He chose a new setting for this book addressed to His servants. Standing, an active position, in the midst of seven candlesticks--later described as the seven churches. With seven stars, the "angels of the seven churches", in His right hand--the hand of work and control. Christ pictured Himself to John as standing in the middle of His churches with the angels completely in His control. Smack dab in the middle -- totally involved! He wanted the church to know that He is aware, active and in charge.

When something or someone needs correcting, He can and does correct. Recent events should make that very clear. He waits. He is criticized for delay. He acts. He is censured for severity. Part of the "just living by faith" is trusting Him to govern His own Body. Especially the leadership who will bear the responsibility of their office. Responsibility demands accountability.

If we believe He is the Head, our words should show it. If we do not, there is no reason to belong to this Church.

Remember, the Church is His Bride. With all our flaws and warts, He is making us into a clean, righteous and faultless bride to marry forever at His return. You would not view with favor anyone who besmerched the reputation of your bride-to-be. Nor does He (Rev. 12:10-11).

Our thinking should not be determined by the hostile, wrathful, distrusting and unforgiving world in which we live. We have been called OUT of it. Our minds must be transformed into the truly converted Christian mind that in an open and honest way follows Christ and the leadership He puts over us.

Perhaps the greatest problem with talk in the Church is the way in which many feel free to speak about or listen to critical words about a brother in the Church or in the ministry. The basic Bible teaching on brotherly relations is found in Lev. 19:18. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." The Jewish scholars expound the famous last phrase by saying "Let the

honor and the property of your fellow man be as dear to you as your own." Frankly, the honor and name of our brothers hasn't been as "dear" to us as God's law says it should be. And that is the basic yardstick He uses in judging us in human relations. That should be an extremely sobering thought.

Jesus Christ's last night on earth as a human being was an emotion etched event. He knew He would not be physically present with His church till His return. He knew the weakness, sins, faults, power struggles and selfish attitudes of those around the table with Him -- and of those who would come later. He also knew they all had PRIDE, that ancient adversary of peace and harmony in the Church of God. So He prayed! If you examine the theme of that prayer in John 17, you will find it is UNITY. "Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me, that they may be one." He asked for God's special help to keep us together. That the wills, wants and pride of the members of Christ's Body would not cause disharmony. And in case anyone wanted to argue about what unity is (as surely many would) He added "as we are". As close and mutually respectful as the Father and the Son. There is no finer example or standard for measuring unity.

With all that has happened over the last several years, the answer to Jesus Christ's prayer is probably the most pressing need for the Church today. We should all be praying for oneness -- especially now.

Most things take action as well as prayer before they are accomplished. Unity is no exception. It takes positive action to produce unity--by everybody.

If words have divided us, words, coming from a right spirit, can help bring us together.

To begin, every member of the body of Christ should let the honor of his fellows be as dear to him as his own.

When someone's name comes up in conversation, make your words convey the love and respect due a brother in Christ. I am not suggesting we all become Pollyannas. You can disagree with someone respectfully. (The British have developed this into an art form. For the French, it is a duty of civilized men!) The key is to assume that if he were present he would put forward sound reasons for his actions or words, that are at least as valid as yours. IF his actions and/or words are known to you. You may have been mongered by a rumor!

Next, the supply of news from official sources must come closer to the demand. Not that supply will ever equal the demand. That is impossible. But for years there has been much room for improvement.

Many rumors involve finance, Mr. Rader and even Mr. HWA himself. So Mr. Rader, as Mr. HWA's assistant and Treasurer for the Work, has held two "forums" for employees here at Pasadena. He asked for any question or any subject from the floor. The enquirers have been candid in their questions. Mr. Rader has been equally candid in his replies.

In the last one on 30 October, the subjects ranged from what financial help the Work gives Mr. Al Portune to which ministers have joined Mr. GTA. No questions were unanswered.

So that everyone can benefit from this forum, the transcripts will be published in the Good News. Regular forums of this type are planned for the future. This openness and candor will help to stop the rumor mill.

Finally, the seditious practice of fracturing into camps within the Church must stop. That is what Satan did; he got all those around him to view with suspicion and malice those that were outside their sphere group!

There should not be "we" and "they" within the Body of Christ. We should all be "us".

Christ gave clear commands to keep division out of His Church. He said "if your brother shall trespass against you" (Matt. 18:15) or if "thy brother has ought against thee" (Matt. 5:23) Go to him directly and get it solved. That instruction was given by Christ personally.

How many reasons can most of us give for not doing it? Regardless of the excuse, we are not doing what God says. Disunity is the result.

God's Church has gone through an extremely trying, sorrowful time. If we can learn and grow from it, as a Body, God can use us more effectively.

Words, conversations, fellowship will always and forever be a part of the Church of God. If those words are of a spirit that helps Christ's final prayer to be fulfilled, God can put us in a position to bring light to all that are in the house. If not, we deserve to be hidden under a bushel!

* * * * *

I certainly agree with Mr. Fahey's remarks. I want to do everything I can to clear up any rumors or gossip that involve my areas of responsibility. But your help and cooperation is needed.

All of you that receive the Pastor's Report should feel free to write to me asking for my comments on any rumor you may have heard. I will write a personal reply to each letter. It needs to be emphasized that any question on ANY subject is welcome. The questioner will not be presumed to believe the rumor or gossip he is asking about unless he states that he does. Rather it will be assumed that he is trying to help stop rumors and the harmful effects they produce in the Church.

Letters should be sent to me marked "personal". In exceptional circumstances, information can be requested by phone. This is obviously best kept to a minimum and only during working hours.

Questions of interest to the whole Church or that are often asked may be published in the Worldwide News. The name of the questioner will not be published in these instances.

By this method, present and future rumors should be put to rest.

--Stanley R. Rader

FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Greetings fellow ministers:

It was very good to see many of you at the Festival sites I visited during the Feast of Tabernacles. Rushed schedules during the Feast do not normally permit very much opportunity to get together with many of you, but what there is certainly is always a delight to me.

Mr. Armstrong's Pastor's Report copy just after the Feast, followed by his Co-Worker letter dated October 23rd were very encouraging. Let me quote one brief paragraph: "The ecstasy -- the inspiration -- the gratitude -- the praise to God for this year's wonderful Festival still holds me enthralled!" Those are truly beautiful words. They're inspiring and motivating, uplifting and encouraging!

Thanks deeply to each one of you who worked so hard, stood solidly in the "gaps," dealt faithfully with the problems, gently steered with loving care the troubled members through the rough places, fought vigorously against the forces of Satan our adversary -- all of which contributed dynamically to making such a wonderful Feast possible.

I believe there are several important things to be observed from this Feast. First and foremost is that the Brethren in God's Church around the world have once again clearly shown that they are converted (I'm talking about the masses -- not the exceptions), that they meant it when they said "It's all the way with Christ" at the time of repentance and baptism. I believe they have shown that they are not weak but rather are "strong in the Lord," with the quality of endurance, are dedicated to this Work in good attitudes, and are loyal to God and the Great Commission of His Church.

Further, I feel that God's people have, as though with a common voice and in a "shout of acclamation," said to Jesus Christ our Head and Chief Administrator, to Mr. Herbert Armstrong our leader among men and to us in Christ's ministry, the shepherds of His people, that "We're with you -- we've seen the turn around and we like it. Even if we may not know every detail about what's happening and why, we do see the reorientation, the redefinition of goals and purposes and we're with it all the way!" I believe this Feast of Tabernacles constituted a massive "vote of confidence" in this Work's leadership.

Now, in my assessment, our brethren are saying "Since we've made the 'turn' let's get our 'act together,' let's see growth and God's Church on the move once again; let's reach out to this world in ever more power with Christ's message of hope, promise and an abundant future!"

Our Festival attendances were a plus this year and thankfully more than we anticipated. Offerings were considerably better than last year in relationship to attendance figures. Our brethren are indeed "the givingest people in the world" as one Evangelist expressed it during the Feast.

Next year, there is no reason why our attendance totals worldwide can't be substantially higher than this year's. God's way is that He will give an abundant harvest. But in the natural order the rains, the

feeding and the nourishing must first come in due season to make that harvest possible. God's way is for those who till the soil and work in the fields to do all those things necessary to produce the harvest -- to work with diligence, with industry and with care. When this is done, God blesses those labors with abundant yield.

Any farmer knows that what he reaps in the fall is going to be commensurate to what he did in the spring and summer.

What I am saying is that I believe with all my being that God wants to give us a "bumper crop" this year. He is the One who gives us that increase. That's His area and He can do it well! But doing the work in the "spring and summer" -- that's our work and we need to do that well -- always with sincere prayer for God's guidance and blessing.

Mr. Armstrong has written much in recent weeks and months about the need for unity and teamwork in Christ's Church. Recently, I have tried to follow Mr. Armstrong's lead and take some of the initiative in efforts to bring this team-spirit, unity, mutual esteem and support to a greater realization.

I am asking each of you to review Mr. Armstrong's article in the Pastor's Report dated July 24th. On page 4 we are clearly instructed not to preach contrary to the Church's official teachings. We are part of a team to pull together, not cause division.

Read again the Report dated September 11th. In this article Mr. Armstrong is profuse in expressing his gratitude and love for the loyalty of the ministers in standing staunchly behind him, behind Christ and the GREAT GOD OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN! But he has instructed us to serve in harmony.

On the top of page 4 Mr. Armstrong said, "Your diligence, loyalty and faithfulness, coupled with the leadership that the living Christ enables me to give you -- THAT IS THE TEAMWORK AND UNITY, under Christ's guidance, inspiration and power, that has continued to pull God's Church through all attacks by Satan."

Fellow ministers, this instruction is our "WORK ORDER." Our cue is taken from the instructions given by the Apostle of Jesus Christ guiding His Work today.

As you all well know, we do not believe in so-called "witchhunts." We don't snoop to find dirt, negative reports and accusations so we can move against the accused. God's Word says not to receive an accusation brought against an elder, but rather that every word is to be established by two or three witnesses.

During the sometimes turbulent, confusing times we have endured, we have not always even acted on the reports of two or three witnesses. Rather, we have tried to understand the contributing factors, uncertain conditions and at times lack of adequate answers.

However, the time has come to act. Patience, mercy, trust, justice and fair treatment will continue. But, we simply are going to take

action against ministers who preach and/or teach any other doctrine than that which they received and were taught in the Church. This is not a threat, it is a simple statement of fact. No one need to worry or fear except the guilty.

Confusion, disorder and disunity are not God's way. If any differences in understanding exist or should occur, there is a way to deal with them. But, causing confusion among the brethren is not one of those ways.

I realize these are strong words but they are said in love. Love, first of all to God's Work and our brethren and love toward all of you -- even the few who may not be able to further walk with us. We simply wish to relieve such people of the pressure to do something they no longer believe.

Thanks again for the great job the vast majority of you are doing. Keep it up and let's work together in love and harmony and reap the blessings God will give as a result of our diligent labors.

Sincerely, in Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Wayne Cole".

C. Wayne Cole

PLAIN TRUTH EDITORIAL UPDATE My family and I had a very interesting and profitable feast in Great Britain. We were treated with great hospitality over there and especially enjoyed renewing some old acquaintances at both feast sites where we attended. As always we discussed the PT and the other Church literature at length with several individuals. Plans are underway to dramatically increase the circulation of the PT in Britain once again. Frank Brown has some exciting plans for the development of the Work in Britain as well as Black Africa.

We are presently working hard to produce the kind of PT Mr. Armstrong wants. I have been given a lengthy set of guidelines as well as other oral instruction from Mr. Armstrong directly. In some cases the latter have been passed on to me by Mr. Rader.

The December issue will be the last of the "old" style PTs. Beginning with January, and especially with the 45th anniversary issue in February, you'll see a different kind of PT. The look will be more conservative, dignified and will contain articles of a more biblical orientation. Mr. Armstrong himself will have four articles in the January issue. He is working very hard on the writing aspects of his ministry as I'm sure you recognize by now. Mr. Armstrong is also at work with a number of other writing projects and I'm sure you'll be hearing about those in the pages of this Pastor's Report as they develop.

We, like Mr. Armstrong, sincerely wish to make the PT "the best magazine on earth." We are working toward that end. The whole staff realizes the need to have the PT reflect the thinking of Mr. Armstrong as accurately as possible. We are endeavoring to bring that about. We would all appreciate your suggestions, support and especially your prayers in accomplishing this. Here is a list of contents for the January PT as it presently stands:

Personal from Mr. Armstrong: Your Human Potential Is Incredibly Greater Than You Have Realized

This Is the Worldwide Church of God, Part II
by Mr. Armstrong

Supernatural Forces on a Collision Course -- What Now?
by Mr. Armstrong

Letters

The United States and Britain in Prophecy, Part III
by Mr. Armstrong

What Is the Devil's Religion?
by Davil Jon Hill

The Crisis at the Close
by John R. Schroeder

Step by Step
by Stanley Rader

The World Tomorrow -- What Will It Be Like?
by Roderick C. Meredith

Is This the Only Day of Salvation?
by C. Paul Meredith

--Brian Knowles, Editorial Services

MR. ARMSTRONG'S MESSAGES VIDEO TAPED AT THREE F.O.T. SITES This year our television crew accompanied Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and taped his sermon messages as he spoke at three Festival sites -- St. Petersburg, Big Sandy and Tucson.

The video pod and a crew of nine (one extra driver) flew and/or drove the length of the continental United States and back during this two-week period. The pod truck, (after a leisurely drive from Tucson and a Day of Atonement stop at New Orleans), arrived in Florida where the taping was to begin.

The hectic schedule swung into high gear once the taping started on the first Holy Day of the Feast, Monday morning at St. Petersburg. After the morning service and while Mr. Herbert Armstrong was addressing the ministers and wives at a special luncheon, the crew was busily tearing down and packing away the equipment. Late Monday afternoon the pod was literally trucking down the road to Big Sandy, Texas (some 1,100 miles away), for our next shoot, Wednesday morning. Once the pod arrived on the Texas campus late Tuesday afternoon, the crew worked into the night setting up for the next day's taping.

When we left Big Sandy, the pressure eased up a little, since Mr. Armstrong would only be speaking one more time -- on the Last Great Day in the Tucson Community Center.

The entire operation was very successful, without too many problems of any major consequence coming up, although we almost had heart failure several times along the way. For example, in Big Sandy we blew several breakers that caused a total power failure in the pod. Cameras, monitors, most of our TV lights, air conditioners, intercoms, video tape recorders all went dead. All of a sudden, those in the pod sat in total darkness and silence. After a mad scramble by our crew, the over-loaded circuits were corrected. Thankfully all this occurred prior to the main message.

The tapes of Mr. Armstrong's sermons look good and we should be able to obtain at least six programs from them. Mr. Armstrong seemed to gain more strength and vitality as the Feast progressed; not that he wasn't already powerful at the first Holy Day in St. Petersburg!

A special thanks to all of you who helped us out, especially Festival Co-ordinators, Mr. Jim Chapman, Mr. Dave Robinson, and Mr. Walter Dickinson and all the choir directors who had to work around us and had to alter their programs in order to accommodate our special needs.

--John Lundberg, Television Production

PUBLISHING SERVICES UPDATE The last-minute plans for a Plain Truth newsstand meeting at each feast site this year turned out to be a great success. Over 500 were in total attendance, which was much larger than anticipated.

Many ideas were discussed and reactions to some of the points were common to all Feast sites. Every area stressed the need for Plain Truth covers to be oriented toward the first time reader. This initial impact is very important to the newsstand program as most of our contacts are first time readers. Brian Knowles and I are working on this. The need

for more communication between headquarters and those involved in the newsstand program was also expressed at each site. We are hoping to start up some kind of regular newsletter to breach the feedback gap.

It was a great opportunity for representatives to exchange ideas and express their thoughts to headquarters. All present felt they gained a great deal from the contact with others performing the same job nationwide. The feedback was also much appreciated here at headquarters and many positive steps are planned for the months ahead. We'll be getting back to you on this later. Thanks for your dedicated enthusiasm.

--Roger Lippross, Publishing Services

GOOD NEWS/WORLDWIDE NEWS UPDATE As announced by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in a co-worker letter dated October 16, 1978, The Good News will soon be changed into a full-color magazine once again and the tabloid newspaper will continue publication under the name The Worldwide News. The Good News staff has already enthusiastically begun work on the first two issues of The Good News magazine and should begin publication with the January 1979 issue.

I have just had a long telephone conversation with Mr. Armstrong regarding its editorial and graphic content. Mr. Armstrong explained to me that he wants The Good News to be devoted to biblical and spiritual articles to feed the membership. He emphasized that he wants The Good News to be sent to all members and co-workers. He said if the co-workers are supportive of the Work and have their hearts in the Work they should also receive The Good News.

The Worldwide News will resume with its emphasis on news of the Work and its leaders throughout the world, as well as announcements of personal news, features on interesting members and additional articles of a spiritual nature.

Mr. Armstrong especially requested that The Worldwide News be sent free of charge and that it be sent automatically to all members or heads of households. Since it is a member publication it will not be sent automatically to co-workers.

We welcome your comments and look forward to serving you with continued news and encouragement through the pages of The Good News and Worldwide News. We also solicit your prayers that we can make these publications a success and helpful to all our members.

NOTE: We want to thank all the festival coordinators who responded so quickly to our request for information pertaining to the individual Feast sites. This made it possible for us to give a complete and interesting picture of the 1978 Feast of Tabernacles.

--Dexter Faulkner, Good News

ON THE WORLD SCENE

IRAN: STRATEGIC COUNTRY IN TURMOIL Over the weekend the violent demonstrations which have wracked Iran for about a year reached into the city center of Teheran, the nation's capital. Youthful demonstrators, about 3,000 strong, vented their wrath against the symbols of Iran's

Westernization -- smashing the windows of banks, hotels, tourist shops and businesses selling alcohol.

The weekend eruption forced Iran's beleaguered leader, Shah Reza Pahlavi, to install a military government and to intensify marshal law. Practically with one stroke he was forced to suspend all the liberalization measures he had been introducing over the past few months -- removing press censorship, permitting the formation of political parties, and the freeing of political prisoners. With every freedom, it seemed, came increased turbulence and greater demands. The Shah has now turned to his greatest ally, the 400,000 strong military establishment, up until now loyal to the Shah but feeling hamstrung with political constraints on dealing with the crescendo of violence.

Will the new tough measures of the Shah work? Will striking laborers -- especially the 37,000 in the crucial petroleum industry -- go back to their jobs? Perhaps for now they have little choice.

The United States has consistently expressed sympathy for the Shah in his mounting dilemma. But the Shah's crackdown runs counter to Washington's human rights drive -- which many prominent Iranians feel helped fuel Iran's turbulence in the first place.

What happens in Iran is critical for several reasons. The country is the world's second largest exporter of oil (after Saudi Arabia). It supplies roughly 8% of U.S. import needs, but is proportionately far more important to the economies of Japan and Western Europe.

Equally important is Iran's geographical position in the tense Middle East/Far East region -- an area that an American expert once called "the real center of the world."

A stable pro-West Iran is absolutely essential to the stability of the region. Ever since the British pulled out of their Mideast sea bases, the United States has depended upon Iran to fill London's shoes as the region's "policeman." The Shah has willingly undertaken this task and has purchased \$21 billion worth of military hardware from the U.S. to step into this role.

Now, however, this role is threatened, the Shah having been forced to divert massive funds to the civilian economy in an attempt to quell the unrest.

Brooding over Iran's troublesome future is the Soviet Union, Teheran's neighbor to the north, with whom it shares a 1,500 mile border. Moscow, of course, supports the Iranian Communist Party, Tudeh. But even if the Communists don't come to power someday, the Kremlin would still benefit from a neutral, traditional Islamic government. One which would undoubtedly trim back Iran's military links to the United States and Europe and put the brakes on Westernization.

The importance of a stable Iran to the entire free world was summed up by a report in the November 13, 1978 issue of U. S. News and World Report:

Iran guards the sea-lanes over which most Iranian, Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabian oil flows to the U.S., Western Europe and Japan.

Russia already has a foothold in neighboring Iraq and is entrenched in Ethiopia and Yemen-Aden, which command the Red Sea access to the Suez Canal. Emergence of a Soviet-aligned Iran thus could give the Kremlin control over both of the West's major oil-supply routes. A major goal of the Soviet Union has long been the acquisition of warm-water ports in South Asia and easy access to the Indian Ocean. Russian naval strength is expanding in that region, but to get there Soviet warships must make the long voyage from Black Sea and Northern Pacific ports.

With a pro-Soviet government now ruling Afghanistan next door and nearby Pakistan boiling with political unrest, a stable government in Teheran is a must if Washington hopes to block further expansion of Moscow's influence in a critical corner of the world.

The Shah's drastic measures may break the back of the violence in his country for the time being. But many experts believe he can't ultimately prevail against the determined opposition of the powerful Shia Moslem leaders and their impassioned followers.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau