

"The WORLD TOMORROW"
A WORLDWIDE BROADCAST

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
Proclaims to the World the
GOOD NEWS OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

BOX 111, Pasadena, California

Publishing
The PLAIN TRUTH
a Magazine of UNDERSTANDING

June 3, 1955

Dear Co-Workers with Christ:

The first television programs have been produced! But when I wrote you, in my last letter, that I was going to have to go thru a gruelling ordeal, impossible without YOUR PRAYERS and divine help from God, little did I then know WHAT an ordeal awaited me! It was the most terrible experience I have had to go thru since the founding of the college.

Going on television has been an entirely new experience. It's nothing like radio. Everyone has a little "mike-fright" the first time on radio. I did -- 22 years ago. But it lasted only the first three or four minutes of the first broadcast. All there was to it was that suddenly, without warning, the first ten seconds or so after I began to speak into a microphone, I found my heart pounding, and I was being forced to breathe hard, as if I'd been running a race. But it was all over in a few moments, and it didn't harm the program.

But when I first came down the steps, onto the rostrum and to the speaker's stand in our TV set, and began to speak, suddenly I was in a new, strange, frightening world -- and my mind went blank, and I found I couldn't speak. I was standing in front of powerful lights like many suns brought down close -- blinding lights -- and behind them all was total DARKNESS. I knew that in front of me, and around me, were 14 men of the TV crew -- camera men, sound men, electricians, technicians, assistants, the director and producer. But I couldn't see them -- only those blinding lights, with the script-girl sitting on a camp-chair far enough in front of the lights that I could see her taking down every word I was trying to say (but not saying) in shorthand.

Those terrific lights seemed to cook my brain. Under the intense heat, believe it or not, my mind FROZE! Then I felt I'd made a fool of myself in front of that Hollywood TV crew. Of course I've been accustomed to speaking to audiences, or into a microphone, for many years. It has grown easy and natural to look down into the faces of an audience, whether small or large -- to gain immediate audience-contact -- to become instantly aware of just TWO THINGS -- with nothing else on my mind -- the AUDIENCE, and my MESSAGE, and the relation of one to the other. Under these circumstances I can THINK on my feet, become completely and earnestly engrossed in the Message, and the audience's NEED of it, and the words just automatically pour out! But on this TV set there was no audience -- just the most blinding lights I ever faced, and behind them inky blackness, and the awareness of totally uninterested technicians who cared nothing about my message!

I don't know whether you can imagine such circumstances -- but if you can, vaguely, try to imagine pouring out a vital Gospel Message for millions to hear, when those millions are not there -- but only this new, strange, bewildering world of blinding lights. Could YOU do it? They told me later that no one does, at first. The announcer, who used to announce our program on radio and has been one of the very top network radio announcers for some 12 years, said it took him TWENTY tries before he could even say his first TV commercial!

Our producer-director told me it was like a jet pilot breaking thru the sound barrier -- over 600 miles an hour. It is AGONY until you finally break thru, then all goes smoothly. Well, this was agony!

I'm accustomed as you know, to speaking with confidence, knowing God has revealed His TRUTH which my hearers NEED -- so that I habitually speak with full assurance, ease, earnestness and authority. But now suddenly all confidence had fled -- there was only a strange bewilderment, a mingled feeling of guilt over wasting God's money you Co-Workers had sacrificed to give, and appearing ridiculous before these technical people and thus casting discredit on GOD, and HIS TRUTH in their eyes.

The producer had kept me up until midnight the night before, and I had to arise at 5:AM that morning for the shooting of the program, and I was utterly devoid of physical strength. Never had I felt so physically weak -- utterly depleted. Again and again I tried, beginning the program all over -- but only to ruin the TV film. I would only say the wrong words -- my mind went blank. I couldn't think of anything to say. I had to quit -- time after time, and try starting over.

I went into a dressing room and tried to lie down and take a short nap to regain some strength, but it was no use! I knew how a whipped dog must feel, with his tail between his legs!

Now let me explain right here that we are having to put the TV programs on film. To do it live, the program would have to go out on only ONE station, or else a whole Network -- and the time alone for a Network Telecast would cost from \$35,000 to \$50,000 for the one program. The only way we can select just the 15, 20, or 30 stations we need at the start, in the areas where most of our radio listeners live, is to put the programs on film. It is by far the least costly way. So of course all we were trying to do now was to get the program on film and sound-track.

I learned, later, that our producers had engaged for us the very TOP Movie-TV crew of all Hollywood, who are accustomed to taking pictures of all the top Hollywood movie and TV stars. But this top-flight crew cost no more. The union sets the wage scale, and a less-experienced crew would have drawn the same high wage- scale. This profession is highly unionized, and we are having to pay the very high union scale for the time for this technical crew of 14 people. Every hour was costing a lot of money. In order to CUT costs, and produce these programs as cheaply as possible, we had planned to shoot three complete programs a day, three days successively -- getting the MOST possible out of this TV crew. But after struggling desperately all day, I had only made a number of beginnings -- utterly unable to produce a single program, or ANY film that could ever be used.

It was the most discouraging, frustrating, disappointing experience of my life! Mrs. Armstrong and I went home, desperately determined to try again next morning. But next morning it was the same. Even after a fair night's sleep, my body was still depleted of strength.

But one thing had begun to give encouragement. Several of the TV crew had mentioned they wished I would hurry up and "break thru that sound barrier," because they had become so INTERESTED in what I was saying they couldn't wait to see how the Message was going to turn out -- it had aroused such suspense in their minds, they could hardly wait to hear the rest of it. They had seen the booklet United States in Prophecy on my desk in the study, and nearly every one of them wanted a copy to read.

The director had told me several times that the whole crew was getting interested -- they had never heard anything like that before -- and all of them, said the director, "are sure pulling for you." Word was telephoned that all the college students and our staff home on the campus were praying, and fasting and praying that I'd be able to conquer this thing, and begin to produce real programs.

But the final climax of this was at the end of the second day, when the producer came into my dressing room, and with his eyes watering up, said that altho several of that TV crew perhaps had never prayed before in their lives, they were every one of them really praying for me now -- because on the next day we had to come thru or give up going on TV!

I'm sure many of you Co-Workers must have been praying for me, too, as I asked in my last letter -- because the next morning I awakened feeling fine, and on the very first try went thru the announcements about the 'U.S. in P' (as we call it here on the campus), just as naturally as I do on radio. When the cameras stopped clicking and the lights went off a great shout went up from all in the studio.

"NOW!" shouted the producer, "You've broken thru that 'sound barrier,' -- everything will go along from now on just like it does in radio."

And, it DID! That afternoon, I went thru the second TV program without a hitch -- just as smoothly, and as confidently, and with the same assurance as in radio or before an audience.

And those technicians, and our producer, who is acting production chief of what is probably the biggest Television studios in the world, say that what has now been produced is something absolutely new and revolutionary in television -- a program that carries terrific impact, arouses instant interest, creates suspense and holds the audience waiting to see how it comes out -- convincing and MOVING. They believe it will win a tremendous audience.

The program will start out with a panorama view of our beautiful Ambassador College campus, as the announcer announces the program. You SEE the campus in the picture, while you HEAR the announcer's voice. Finally the cameras sweep around onto a tame lion, a little calf or a lamb, and a little child leading them -- AS IT WILL BE IN THE WORLD TOMORROW -- according to Isaiah 11:6. Read it! Then the scene shifts, as the announcer announces me, to the auditorium rostrum, and I begin the sermon. You'll SEE my daughter Beverly, and son Ted, singing the same duet they recently sang on the radio network. The first program is about a prophecy already startlingly fulfilled, and just before the close of the program I take you into the study, pull down a movie-screen, and SHOW you the actual motion pictures of the amazing, dumbfounding FULFILLMENT of the prophecy, before your very eyes, while you still hear my voice explaining it. Then I sit down at my desk, show the "U.S. in P" booklet, then introduce Mrs. Armstrong sitting beside me as she usually does in the radio studio (she said she TRIED to smile at you, but doesn't remember whether she succeeded -- she was under those blinding lights, too) and then I introduce our Ambassador Chorale of 31 voices under direction of Prof. Leon Ettinger, and you hear the announcer's voice, and see the words of screen credits over the singing and humming of the chorale, as the program comes to a close. The program is a CHALLENGE to all skeptics and atheists who doubt that God exists, or that the BIBLE is His Word, or that it carries absolute AUTHORITY.

So, instead of just HEARING the message, you will SEE our campus, our singers, the astounding moving pictures that PROVE the amazing fulfillment of the prophecy, you'll see Mrs. Armstrong (not on most programs, but I felt our radio listeners and co-workers would want me to introduce her on this first program), and you'll see our Ambassador Chorale, beside hearing the Message. TV will allow me to ILLUSTRATE and PROVE many things to doubters in a way not possible on radio. I hope you'll like the TV programs, and that they will lead many times more people to CHRIST, and to changed lives IN Christ, and to salvation, than is possible on radio.

We were scheduled to have produced nine programs in those three days. Actually we did get TWO programs completed. I feel I must take you fully into my confidence in this. In round figures, it costs \$3,000 per day -- including studio rentals, all the equipment (one of the three cameras used cost \$17,000) and the high union wage scales for the crew of 14, etc. About \$500 of this expense is the cost of setting up, and taking down (or striking) the sets; so we cannot afford to work on the sets just one day at a time, but must work three days successively. The sets are put up on Monday. We shoot the programs on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and they "strike," or take down the sets on Friday -- thus actually requiring one week. By doing it this way, we are able (or will be) to produce the programs for about \$1,000 per program. I explained in the previous letter that nearly all the worldly entertainment programs have a production cost averaging \$35,000 per program. So we are trying to do it for one-thirty-fifth their cost. Ultimately we hope to have these programs running on about 100 TV stations, so that the actual cost of production finally is lowered down to only \$10 per station per program. Further, we are planning so that we can buy the station time for one-third or one-fourth the cost paid by the big commercial sponsors -- the tobacco, liquor and cosmetics industries, etc.

I have been so anxious to get our TV program going at comparative LOW COST. I have done my best. I guess no man can do more. But I did -- and I still do -- feel really terrible over having been unable to go thru with those first programs ON SCHEDULE.

And so now, dear Co-Workers, I have to come to the part of this letter I'm ashamed to have to write you -- but I must. This struggle I had, getting myself broken into speaking naturally before TV cameras and lights as I do before audiences or radio microphones, actually cost us about \$8,000. This very knowledge made it the more difficult. It was like seeing \$8,000 washed down the drain into the sewer -- just thrown away. As the minutes and hours ticked away, and I was unable to really get GOING before the cameras, realizing it was wasting hard-earned, dearly-sacrificed money you Co-Workers had sent, I became more and more frantic and frustrated -- but somehow something seemed to have happened to me that I couldn't help. Even so, we produced these first two programs for ONE-SEVENTH the usual and average cost of TV production.

NOW, in order to get the TV programs ON THE AIR on schedule, we have to work in another three-day shooting in either two or three weeks from now -- another \$10,000 cost.

WE CAN'T delay, and wait for our next scheduled shooting date, which was to have been July 5, 6, and 7, -- because unless we cancel the RADIO NETWORK with the July 17th broadcasts, we are BOUND by our contract not to cancel until our fiscal year is up, which will be late in October. We cannot go off radio on July 17th, unless we can go on TV the following Sunday -- July 24th. To go OFF the air completely would be to lose hundreds of thousands, or MILLIONS of listeners we have spent thousands of dollars to get interested. Once OFF the radio Network, unless we are already ON these TV stations, our advertising agency tells us we probably would be unable to ever get on TV at all!

So IT BOILS DOWN TO THIS: We are FORCED, now, to set up another 3-day TV-shooting date not later than two or three

weeks from now -- because we MUST have a certain number of programs already produced ahead on film, before we dare start on the air -- and further because I have to fly to England on July 11th for three weeks, to supervise getting our European headquarters office set up in London, and the European edition of The PLAIN TRUTH going out.

That means we have to raise an additional \$10,000 we had not counted on IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS over and above all regular running expenses.

Co-Workers, THAT MEANS THE BIGGEST EMERGENCY WE EVER FACED!

I would rather suffer ANYTHING than have to ask you to make the SUPREME sacrifice required to accomplish this. But, God helping me, there is just nothing else I can do. I couldn't suffer more than I did those first two days trying to learn to speak to a vast audience that wasn't, THEN, there, in front of those blinding lights. I had to really suffer seven and eight years ago that Ambassador College could be born. I had to suffer that this Television program could be born. I guess I simply have to ask you dear Co-Workers to suffer with me, and make the supreme sacrifice now to GO OVER THE TOP with this in the next two weeks.

I feel perfect confidence, now, that I can go right along with the TV production, three programs a day. And I believe, from what the TV experts, my wife, some of our ministers and Co-Workers here said, who saw those first two programs finally produced, that it will be a program that will really attract a tremendous TV audience. They tell me there's nothing like it on TV. Our producer says that it not only is head and shoulders ahead of any other religious program on TV, but he actually believes it will pull viewers right away from the top entertainment programs. Perhaps this terrible struggle we've been thru will have proved WORTH ITS COST, thousands of times over, after all! It's not just an ordinary religious or speech program -- it's a REAL TV PRODUCTION! And these top producers of Hollywood say, one of the very BEST.

Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ, IT'S UP TO YOU! I hope you won't feel hard toward me because I couldn't get going those first two agonizing, torturous days. I HATE having to ask you to make up for my loss. But there's NO OTHER WAY, NOW. And MILLIONS of precious lives are at stake, that will be reached, and touched, and MOVED, AND CONVERTED, by this Television program. A survey among thousands of our radio listeners shows that we are now reaching only one-eleventh as many people who have TV sets as those who do NOT have TV. We just are not reaching these people any more on radio. We may even have to go DAILY on TV, if people keep on forsaking radio for TV. THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE.

If we are to hurdle this barrier, it's going to take not only a STILL bigger deluge of widows' mites than ever before -- it's also going to take some REAL sacrificing on the part of the very FEW who are able to send in contributions of \$1,000 or even \$3,000 or more. We MUST meet this goal, or the whole Television program may fail! Much as I hate to have to ask you, Co-Workers, WILL you make one more big push -- mightier than ever this time? PLEASE PRAY FOR THIS AS NEVER BEFORE!

I'm more sorry than I can put in words for this temporary set-back in getting the first nine programs produced. We have to remember that we are only POOR HUMAN INSTRUMENTS of God. But WE, nevertheless, are the ones God has called, and is USING in His last glorious work on this earth -- carrying the VERY SAME Gospel Jesus preached to ALL THE WORLD AS A WITNESS -- preparing the way for CHRIST'S COMING! Poor human instruments though we are, WE ARE THE ONLY ONES GOD IS USING TO CARRY THIS DYNAMIC, TRUE MESSAGE TO ALL THE WORLD.

It is, after all, ONLY GOD who never makes any mistakes! And so, regretful as I am, dear Co-Workers, I HAVE to ask your SUPREME SACRIFICE, now, and continuously, not for my sake, but for the sake of the most important work on earth, and in the name of Jesus Christ.

God bless you, dear Co-Workers! I love you for what you have done, and will now do, and for your earnest, believing PRAYERS!

In Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong