

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD  
WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG  
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

April 12, 1973

Dear Brethren of God's Church:

I have just received quite a shock. On picking up a financial report issued by the Financial Affairs Division, I was horrified to notice that for the month of March there was a loss of 23%, COMPARED to March of last year, in receipt of the SPECIAL OFFERINGS for the BUILDING FUND. On checking, I found that February showed a similar deficit.

That probably is my fault. Now that this outstandingly magnificent HOUSE FOR GOD is under construction -- more than half completed -- I guess I assumed you would all continue those very necessary SPECIAL BUILDING FUND offerings. I overlooked sending out the STATEMENT OF INTENTION slips. Please forgive me. But please also try to make up the lost time and serious deficit in these necessary SPECIAL offerings.

As construction progresses, I myself have come to realize what I did not, fully, before -- just what a superb, unequalled edifice this is turning out to be. I simply have not been able, before, to describe for you its true qualities and beauty.

Of course, it must also serve the functions of auditorium for God's college at the Headquarters campus. But to us it is being built primarily as the HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL, OUR GOD. For that reason it must be outstanding -- the finest in quality and character. Our God is SO GREAT that nothing less than the finest we can build could properly honor THE GREAT GOD, and be a monument to His name and His GLORY!

Of course this is not a TEMPLE. It cannot remotely equal Solomon's great Temple -- either in magnificence, or cost. Some authorities estimate that it would cost, today, upwards of six billion DOLLARS to build Solomon's temple. That's SIX THOUSAND MILLION dollars!

Actually this is a comparatively small auditorium. It will seat between 1250 and 1300 people. That's only one-third the seating capacity of the auditorium in Dallas where my son Garner Ted had his last Personal Appearance last Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights (every seat full, and hundreds unable to get in).

There was no necessity to build this auditorium larger than it is. Of course, for Church services, we could fill a 4,000-seat auditorium -- and in a year or two we would even out-grow that! But for College forums, assemblies and other functions, our 500 students would look lost in a 4,000-seat auditorium. And we could not afford a larger one, with the quality and character we must have to glorify GOD as HIS HOUSE at His present earthly Headquarters of His Work, His Church, and His College.

The TEMPLE, planned by King David and built by King Solomon, was a different kind of building. But the kind and size are only relative. It is because the Temple was to be GOD'S Temple, we read in the Bible, that it had to be "EXCEEDING MAGNIFICENT" (I Chronicles 22:5). Or, as translated in the Revised Standard Version, "For David said, Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built must be EXCEEDINGLY MAGNIFICENT, of fame and glory throughout all lands; ..." And the Moffatt translation has: "... the house which is to be built for the Eternal must be incomparably magnificent, far-famed, and glorious."

WHY? Because it is for THE GREAT GOD, who is SO GREAT that nothing less than the finest and best could properly honor HIM!

Even though this House for God we are building is smaller and a different kind of building (and therefore of only a very tiny fraction of the cost), still, in CHARACTER and QUALITY and BEAUTY, it must be the finest we can make it. And the contractors who are erecting it tell me it IS actually the very finest on earth for this type, kind, and size of building.

Solomon later said, "And the house which I build is GREAT: for great is our God above all Gods." (II Chronicles 2:5.)

Because GOD is the GREATEST, the Temple to honor Him had to be the finest. Because our GOD is GREATEST, even our comparatively small auditorium must be THE FINEST -- and that is precisely what it is turning out to be! The Bible expresses GOD'S WILL -- and this superb quality and character building is being constructed according to HIS WILL!

During the January Ministers' Conference, I arranged to take the visiting ministers through the building. There was no roof on it yet. No finish work anywhere. But they were amazed at what they saw. In every way it is a most superb and outstanding building. The contractors who are building it, and the inspector who checks every step of the construction for us, both tell me this is a structure ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE in all the earth -- the soundest in construction, and will be the finest in appearance, of any auditorium on earth. Not only the finest in Southern California -- they say, THE FINEST ON EARTH! The city welding inspector, checking all welding continually on the job, told me that all welding is exceeding the strict requirements of the plans and city codes. He said that in case of an earthquake, it would be the safest place to be in Southern California.

It is of steel and concrete construction throughout. Concrete to date is 5,049 1/2 cubic yards -- 202 million pounds. Concrete can be poured in various strengths. State requirements are 1,500 pounds per square foot on foundations, and 2,000 on walls and other parts above ground. The strength of the concrete in GOD'S HOUSE is averaging more than 4,000 pounds per square foot. It's all tested by California Testing Laboratories.

For fire protection: asbestos and silicon is being sprayed 1-inch to 1 1/2-inches in thickness on all steel and steel beams. Our inspector says it will be a bomb shelter.

But the FINISH throughout will be just as superb -- the FINEST ON EARTH. Everything about the construction of this House for God is progressing just as if, in a miraculous way, God Himself is watching, and causing everything to come out JUST RIGHT!

The onyx that will line the walls of the entrance lobby is simply the MOST BEAUTIFUL I have ever seen. The black-green polished granite is now being put on the outside of the building. It is exceedingly beautiful! The two Steinway Concert-Grand pianos are simply the finest in action, response, and tone that our pianists have ever put their fingers on. The rich carpeting, being specially woven in Hong Kong, in bright blue, gold, purple and scarlet -- the colors God Himself selected for the Tabernacle and for the Temple -- are absolutely the most BEAUTIFUL I have ever seen. A few samples already have arrived from the Hong Kong factory. The big front curtain over the stage is in three shades of gold, bright and striking, and of silk velour, with a striking sheen. The entire construction, of steel and concrete, is the most sound, substantial and solid possible. God is being HONORED -- and He is PLEASED!

Of course the workmen are from outside the Church -- just as Solomon had to go outside Israel for much, if not most of the fine craftsmen -- but these men put their hearts into their work, until it seems they know this is to be GOD'S building, and feel that it must in every way be the BEST.

Of the Temple, David said: "I have prepared with all my might for the House of my God ... because I have set my affection to the House of my God. ... Then the people REJOICED, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the ETERNAL: and David the King also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the Eternal before all the congregation: and David said, ... But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given thee." (I Chronicles 29:2,3,9-10,14.)

Brethren, God put His approval on our building this comparatively small auditorium (seating 1250), and it is now quite a little more than half finished. Fine as it is, the cost is infinitesimal compared with Solomon's great Temple. But it will stand as a fitting and beautiful and superb monument to our GREAT GOD. He is now prospering His Work more than ever. What we have has come from God, and it therefore is OF HIS OWN that we contribute WILLINGLY, as David's people did.

Remember, our GOD has LAVISHED every spiritual blessing on us. He has also given us the wonderful PRIVILEGE of having each his own important PART in getting HIS GOSPEL to the world in these closing days of this age. All we have in material goods or money has come of Him. We are only giving OF HIS OWN to this special building fund.

Remember, God's outstandingly beautiful House is already more than half finished. The work on it is going forward, with more than 100 men on the job, continually. We cannot turn back -- we are obligated to PAY FOR IT! Added to what we already had from the Building Fund on hand, God gave us favor in the eyes of our bankers, and of large insurance companies to make large-scale and long-term loans to provide 100% financing. Did you ever hear of such a thing before?

Incidentally, when our bank made the first moderate-sized loan to us, we were NOT then in good and sound financial condition. The officer at the bank who approved and obtained approval of the loan committee at the bank did it in sheer FAITH in us. God blesses those that bless His Work. That man was in a rather low position at the bank then, comparatively. Do you know where he is now? AT THE VERY TOP -- Chairman of the Board! Whether he realizes it or not, the living God blessed him! We have never let him down. WE WON'T NOW! But this was MAJOR financing -- multi-million dollars -- for God's House. The loans are long-term. We shall have to continue making payments of \$200,000 per month long after the splendid edifice is completed. We should not have to take funds from getting THE GOSPEL to the world to make these monthly payments.

Therefore, IF you take money from your tithes or regular offerings for the GOSPEL WORK, and earmark it for the BUILDING FUND, then the GOSPEL WORK suffers -- we have to cut off radio or TV stations, or reduce The PLAIN TRUTH circulation, or the Correspondence Course.

So BE SURE that your offerings for the Building Fund are over and above tithes and regular offerings.

At present, the indication is that GOD'S SUPERB HOUSE will be completed about February or March next year -- 1974. God looks down from heaven and is watching what we are doing, in the progress of HIS HOUSE. In the Moffatt translation of the Bible, we read: "The Eternal looks down from heaven, beholding all mankind. From where He sits, He scans all who inhabit the world; He who also made their minds, He notes all they do. ... the Eternal's eye rests on His worshippers, who rest their hopes upon His kindness, ..." (Psalm 33:13-18 -- Moffatt translation.)

The living Christ is WATCHING this construction -- and He is PLEASED. He is WATCHING you and me, taking note of our part in it. He realizes this magnificent edifice is the product of MANY OF HIS OWN PEOPLE -- as offering to our God, and to glorify His name -- and HE IS PLEASED! I'm sure you realize this fine project cannot be put in the category of an ordinary college building -- this is to GLORIFY THE GREAT GOD!

An actual photograph of this very outstanding edifice is on the front cover of The GOOD NEWS, as this House of God appears as of NOW -- covered all around with scaffolding.

So, Brethren, I will not delay longer in getting the STATEMENT OF INTENTION slips to you. Yours is enclosed. Remember, it does not bind you. IF, for some reason, you are not able to meet it every month, or even if forced to discontinue, you are free to do so. It is not a pledge or an oath or any such thing -- just a statement of INTENTION, as you now estimate you will be able. But if you can INCREASE what you have put in this fund in the past, please do so. Remember, all tithes and offerings are income tax deductible.

God has answered our prayers in this and shown us His will. How much will we now do for HIM?

With much love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong