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PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Greetings ministers and wives!

At times in the past people have requested that we produce a booklet listing all the guidelines and judgments that have been made in God's end-time Church. The only problem with this idea is that in many cases, you cannot apply a flat solution across many problems. Every situation is different, and many times problems require different solutions.

As ministers, WE ARE OFFICERS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE. We have to think like warriors, able to make strong decisions with a keen sense of judgment.

Churchill taught this lesson very well in his series on his ancestor Marlborough. He was talking about what makes someone a military genius. In wartime, every leader needs a lot of quantitative data to make the right decisions. Every war situation is different, and judgment must change according to circumstances. Those circumstances include all the factors at work at the time within the war. "The dynamic sum of all these shifting forces constitutes military genius," he wrote. Genius sees everything at play, and acts with that understanding.

Churchill said that NOTHING BUT GENIUS can answer the riddles of wars. Genius is a quality much rarer than diamonds—something that can't be acquired by reading or experience. Most wars are tales of muddle! It's very rare to have a Churchill come and make sense of all the muddle! Most generals don't know how to fight. In the Civil War, for example, it took years before Lincoln had a general who knew how to fight.

Thankfully, as God's spiritual officers, ministers have access to the greatest military genius of all: Jesus Christ. When we are out dealing with problems, there can be a lot of hazard and confusion, and we must bring clarity to the situation and work toward solutions. Our Commander knows how to do this, and having Him living in us makes us capable. The military genius who heads the Church can give us the solutions.

We all need to ask God for understanding and wisdom. We really need it! Pray for it every day! We need God's vision in order to see and to understand what we're dealing with. You will never win a war or battle without understanding. We can't approach problems looking for the quick, easy answer. Cooks use recipes, but every great operation of war is unique. Proper judgment requires, as Churchill called it, a "profound appreciation of the actual event."

Churchill said that in order to succeed in warfare, you can't be the captain of a ship—you must be the captain of the war. You must see the WHOLE WAR. This is what we need in the ministry—people who see the whole situation. You must be able to see the problems on the local level in context with what headquarters is doing.

Correct decisions in warfare cannot be copied exactly from examples of the past. As Churchill said, NO BATTLE EVER REPEATS ITSELF! Consider it: World War II was different from World War I in profound ways. France tried to fight World War II the way they did the First World War and lost in six weeks! World War III will be different still—most nations will be beaten before they even have a chance to respond!

World War I was getting bogged down in trench warfare. Churchill said, *There has to be a better way.* The Dardanelles campaign was an effort to stop that—he wanted to come at the Germans from the rear. This was probably the most strategic idea that came out of the World War I. The only problem was, he wasn't given the power to fully implement the decision, and the strategy failed. Even then, the Turks later said the Allies were "inches from success." The whole world blamed Churchill for the defeat anyway.

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Studying the lessons of the past is helpful—but knowing your history doesn't eliminate the need to make judgments appropriate to the moment. Of course, knowing all the circumstances won't make all of a leader's decisions free from error. Every leader is bound to make mistakes—but thoroughly assessing the present situation will give a leader, as Churchill put it, "ultimate practical accuracy" in his decisions.

In principle, we're dealing with that reality in God's Church. When it comes to certain judgments, for example (not speaking doctrinally), we cannot do everything exactly as Mr. Armstrong did. Times are different. Our commission is different. A large percentage of problems we deal with are different from those we have known in the past. The devil we're dealing with today is more wrathful than in the past! He knows how to come at us from different directions.

That's why we cannot have a "book of judgments." *We need the Spirit of God guiding us to see what is really happening.* Obviously there are rules and laws we must follow in the ministry, but so often we can't break the correct answers down to simple rules or models, even though that is what we tend to want. "Genius requires an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts," Churchill wrote.

Understand the enemy! Satan knows where we lack understanding. He knows how to get you confused if you're relying on your own solutions. We must go to Christ and get that understanding. Like Christ, we must say, "I can of my own self do nothing." That's why cookie-cutter solutions can actually be a big problem! We're in a profound business, working for God. It requires understanding human nature and understanding the devil, as well as understanding the situation you're dealing with.

In counsel, you really have to listen. In general, ABOUT HALF OF THE COUNSELING SESSION SHOULD BE YOU LISTENING. This is critical in order to make sure you know what that problem is. Most of the ministers in the WCC did it that way. How can you use your firepower if you don't know where the real problem is?

One minister I worked under did just about everything different from how I would have—but I saw it all work! For three and a half years I watched him counsel people. I consider that as valuable as the education I received at Ambassador College. *Telling* a younger minister how to do it is one thing—*showing him how* is another.

Another minister I worked with automatically had an answer for everything. He didn't know how to counsel people, and yet that was his job. We must always be careful of answering questions on the run!

Being a minister is the most exalted calling God gives to anyone. But working with God's people is also the most difficult job in the world. It's hard to solve these problems! We will make mistakes—but we must work hard to ensure that we don't make too many. God's people need help!

There are times we won't know what to do. That's when we must just keep praying and praying until we get the answer. We have access to that help. What's dangerous is the guy who thinks he knows, when he doesn't! If you think you have a solution to every problem, there is a real problem there.

God will give you the answer when you don't have an answer. Don't ever take credit for that miracle! Or you'll see quickly that YOU ARE NOT A GENIUS IN THIS WAR. The only way you can be the "military genius" that you must be in order to do your job correctly, is to LET CHRIST LEAD YOU.

With love, in Christ's service,



CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Ordaining Deacons

When should you consider ordaining a deacon in a congregation? The WCG considered it a general rule that there should be 50 people for a deacon to take care of. The PCG has few congregations of 50 people, and we have varied this somewhat, but it should still be factored into the decision. Also, as a general rule, there should be a local church elder for every 100 people. In this too, perhaps there would be exceptions.

God's House

The Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, California, should no longer be referred to as "God's house."

YES Lessons

The PCG still does not have the rights to print and distribute the old WCG Youth Educational Services lessons. If individual families want to download those lessons off the Web, that's within their rights to do so, but they are on their own. The Church does not offer any official youth lessons, and headquarters will not send any photocopied lessons.

Marriage Prayers

In performing wedding ceremonies of converted couples in the Church, remember to ask God to *bind the couple together* in your prayer after the ceremony. This would not be the case for unconverted couples.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

This week on God's land has been short due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Most of the student help has gone home or off to visit with friends. The week started with the weather being just as wet as last week. We did however have a few days of sunny and windy weather on Thanksgiving Day and Friday. This however didn't allow us to do much work outside because it was so wet over the previous days.

HALL OF ADMINISTRATION

With all of the wet weather we have been unable to do any more dirt work on the Hall of Administration site. We have had only a couple of days without bad weather and they have been too few to make enough difference in the muddy conditions on site. Either we are not praying specifically and diligently enough, or God is working out something that we can't see at the moment. Either way it will take at least a few more good days without rain before we can get back to doing the dirt work. Unfortunately, the forecast seems to indicate that once it dries out, we will be in for the next front coming through with 90 percent chance of rain and so the cycle could start all over again.

We have still been working on getting all of the contractors lined up. A HVAC and plumbing contractor was selected, only to find out afterward that they had not quoted exactly the same equipment that the other contractors quoted. The difference in quality is something we are looking in to. I have found out that the

equipment that this contractor selected is also on the list of acceptable alternative equipment. After further research, I have found that Wal-Mart uses this equipment in all of its new stores, so it can't be all that bad. The savings could be as much as 50,000 dollars, so I am pursuing this fervently. We may need to take another look at which contractor will be the best. I am waiting for a response back from the desired contractor to see if he was able to "sharpen his pencil" a little.

NEW DORMITORY

Our architects are currently reviewing the dormitory upgrade and revisions. The architect originally responsible for this project under Mr. Thompson's direction was Curtis, and he is currently working through the code implications to ensure that we have an appropriate toilet count for the new codes and classroom modifications. They have determined that the addition of a basement is not feasible given the schedule constraint, structural redesign, and most likely construction cost.

They think that a freestanding metal building is much more economical for storage. In addition, they say we can purchase a pre-manufactured storm shelter, which could be installed by a vendor, near the building, without the complications of commercial building codes that require us to provide stairs and an elevator. Hopefully, since it's after Thanksgiving break, we will have some more feedback so we can get the revised plans to the Fire Marshall quickly.