



PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

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Greetings, ministers and wives!

The 2005 ministerial conference is fast approaching! This will prove to be our best, most exciting and largest conference ever. Over 120 people will be attending! That's quite a contrast from our first conference in 1992, which had five ministers and two trainees.

I'd like to encourage you to soak in the headquarters environment as much as possible. A lot of work has happened on the Imperial College campus since our last conference. You'll be able to see our new Mail Processing Center and our new men's dorm. Three faculty homes are already completed, and I hope to be moved into my new home by that time. The ground work for the Hall of Administration is also quite impressive. We plan to give you a look at the Steinway concert grand piano while you're here.

You will also be able to meet our growing Imperial College student body, who will be serving you throughout the conference.

At headquarters we are making our final preparations for the lectures, the meals and all the other physical details. But you ministers need to understand that you have an important part to play in preparing as well.

Please pray for the weather before, during and after the conference. Having the conference in the winter means we can be dealing with colder, more dangerous weather. Not only could this make your time here less comfortable, it could cause serious problems for everyone's travel to and from the conference.

Pray earnestly for the men who will be speaking. Our regional directors and department heads will be giving material that is *vital* for us to fulfill our offices as God wants us to. This kind of leadership training should provide a dramatic uplift to the whole Church, as it filters down to every member through each of you.

I will be giving four two-hour lectures. A large portion of these messages will be taped and sent out to be played in all congregations. I am going to show how Daniel unlocks the book of Revelation. Hopefully, you will also see why most of God's own people didn't understand these books—even *before* Mr. Armstrong died! That is why they were so easily deceived.

We must all come prepared to listen. Draw close to God in prayer and even fasting in order to have a ready mind to receive this intensive instruction.

Be prepared as well to spend a lot of time with the other ministers. We will be sharing most all of our meals together. We will also be able to enjoy a relaxing afternoon with just the ministers on the Sunday during the conference. We need these opportunities to build real *unity* in the brotherhood of the ministry! Make the most of these opportunities to fellowship. God's Church needs a strongly unified ministry to build unity within the whole Church.

Thank you for your loyalty and dedication to God's Work. Your effort is desperately needed and deeply appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE

Because of the ministerial conference, the next PGR will be the January 22, 2005 issue.

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With love, in Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Flurry".

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mental Disorders

Extreme care must be taken in determining whether to invite to services new contacts who have mental disorders such as schizophrenia. There is no rush, and ministers must take adequate time so you can be absolutely certain they're being called by God.

God's Family Grows Forever?

Whenever preaching from scriptures like Isaiah 9:7, remember: The idea that God's Family will increase forever—that there will be more groups of human beings after the present Master Plan is complete—is speculative, not definitive. Mr. Armstrong speculated that God would go on creating elsewhere in the universe as He has on Earth,

but the Bible doesn't say that directly. Mr. Flurry's article "Declaring the Mystery," in the July-August 2004 issue of the *Royal Vision*, makes several strong statements that ministers can lean on in making any points about future growth possibilities in God's Family.

Spokesman Club

Ministers should be careful of only putting Spokesman Club members on the list of prayer men or songleaders in a congregation. While it is true that generally the leading men all may be in Club, there may be some deeply converted people, perhaps elderly men, who aren't in the Club—and some very carnal people in the Club! We must keep our priorities straight.

EDITORIAL SERVICES

I wanted to give you a brief update of our progress on the new *Trumpet* website.

In fulfilling our watchman commission, the Internet provides a unique opportunity. It gives us the potential ability to give people important news *as it is happening*, rather than several weeks or months later—as is the case with the printed version of the *Trumpet* magazine.

For a long time we have wanted to include regularly updated news content on the website, rather than having it remain purely issue-based. That is, we want to make the *Trumpet* site a resource that people regularly look to for analysis and understanding about events as they are occurring. It would essentially be an online marriage of the work of the *Trumpet* and News Bureau staff—the content of the *International News Report* plus the *Trumpet*, and then some, on an immediate basis. Imagine having a website where we could *immediately* post analysis of a 9/11-type event, or give people the latest news about what is happening in the Middle East or Europe—and *why* it is happening. It doesn't take much imagination to see how this could dramatically increase our effectiveness in assisting Mr. Flurry in doing God's watchman work.

About two years ago, we came up with a thorough set of plans for how we could create a website that could be updated each day, perhaps even several times a day, with news briefs and occasional lengthier articles organized in a way that would give people important news from around the world, and more in-depth coverage in specific areas of interest. Other priorities have shelved these plans until very recently.

IC student Patrick Hogan was brought into the editorial department this year specifically to upgrade the *Trumpet* website. He has been working all semester to build the infrastructure for the new site. He is creating new database management software that will enable us to hold a tremendous number of articles and access them in a multitude of different ways—and would exist independent of the surface-level functionality of the website (so we could change the look and feel of the site and the formatting of the articles at any time without having to change every little article). He is also working to build in many of the features we have long wanted on the site—including, most importantly, a very robust search engine.

Patrick is now close to finishing a bare-bones, working model of the new site. He plans to have it functioning by mid-January—right around the time of the ministerial conference. From there, we will begin filling it with current news content as well as articles from the back issues of the *Trumpet*, our booklet inventory and other literature. The plan at this stage is to spend perhaps a month or so getting used to the new interface and incorporating it into our daily workflow—so we grow accustomed to writing the short news clips as stories emerge each day—and also using that time to build enough content that it will be a rich experience for people when the website goes live.

God willing, we will be able to launch the fully functioning new *Trumpet* website in February or March.

Joel Hilliker

MINISTERIAL TRAINING SERIES

UNDERESTIMATED KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL SERMON

By Joel Hilliker

It might seem minor—it's certainly something we can overlook if we're not careful—but it's a vital and often underestimated key to giving a successful sermon: *finishing on time*.

Wil Malone told me that he tried to finish his messages *early*. Whenever he did, people would always congratulate him for it. The truth is, people don't know what they're not hearing if you finish early, but they certainly know when you go over your time limit! According to Mr. Malone, Mr. Armstrong said that for every minute you go over, *you lose two minutes of effective speaking time* because people are looking at their watches and saying, *When is this guy going to end?* If I'm not careful, I can tend to speak right to the top of the hour—and that's not right. Ideally the sermon should end about five minutes til, leaving time for the final song and prayer. (This also means making sure the sermon can start at about 20 minutes to the hour rather than quarter til—giving the sermon speaker about 75 minutes.) After pouring my heart into a message, I've heard comments such as, "That sermon was *long!* Good, but long." So the most outstanding quality of the message—no matter what its content, no matter how much preparation I put into it—was that it was **LONG!**

Our sermons should be 1:12 to 1:15 at the most. We should strive to stick to that, even if we start earlier and technically could go longer to fill the full two hours. It can feel wonderful to be able to quit 5 or 10 minutes early—to, as the old saying goes, "stand up, speak up, shut up and sit down."

How can we do this?

There are probably a number of ways, depending on the kind of speaking notes you prepare, and how extemporaneous your delivery style is.

I'd like to share a simple technique I've developed that has helped me tremendously whenever I have a message with a lot of material that I'm concerned about being able to get through on time. This has helped men in our Homiletics class, Imperial College lecturers and field ministers, who have found it extremely helpful. At the Feast of Tabernacles one year, one speaker had two messages. In the first message he gave, he had prepared five points, but because he strayed from his notes and spoke extemporaneously he was only able to finish two

of them. In his second message, he used this technique and got through all his notes, resulting in a much more complete message.

This technique also gives us a way to avoid ever having to say, *I'm going to have to speed up; I'll have to skip some of this; I don't have enough time to get through all this; there's a lot of material I'd like to give you but I can't*. If we are organized enough, whatever time we are given to speak should be the perfect amount of time. It is incumbent upon us as speakers to have the **RIGHT AMOUNT OF MATERIAL**—*not* on whoever has organized our speaking opportunity to structure the event around the size of our message.

First, in Homiletics class I highly recommend *having less material than would fill the time completely*—particularly if you are prone to straying from your notes. It is ideal to have the luxury of being able to give your message in a *relaxed manner*—to be able to expound on a point you feel didn't come out well—to be able to indulge any bursts of inspiration. If you have exactly the amount of material to fill the time, you are stuck to your notes. Too much material and we practically have to read it, which hinders our contact with the audience and can be a much less enjoyable experience as a speaker.

Again, this technique probably isn't necessary if you have fewer notes. It is more useful when you have a lot of notes and fear you won't be able to get through them.

Next, *get a sense for about how long it takes you to get through a page of notes*. We all have different styles; if you, as some of our headquarters ministers do, use a "mind-mapping" system, obviously this won't work. But most speakers use a linear system, written down page after page like a manuscript. I've found that it usually takes me about an hour to get through five pages of notes at a comfortable pace. So usually if I have more than about seven pages for a sermon, I'm in trouble. For a 15-minute sermonette, I'm pushing it if I have two full pages.

Third, when you've pared down your material to where you have only the best, *divide the amount of time you have by the number of pages of notes*, and then *write on the top of each page where you should be in your time at that moment*. With six pages, you have 12 minutes per page for a 72 minute sermon. With nine pages of notes, you

have eight minutes per page to fill 72 minutes (75 possible). With 10 pages of notes, you have only seven minutes per page to fill 70 minutes. At the top of each page, I write the page I'm on and the number of pages I have to get through: 1-6, 2-6, etc. Then, above that, on the first page I write 1:40 if that's when the sermon is supposed to start; on the second page I would write 1:52, then 2:04. This gives me a little mile marker at each turn of a page, and I can tell whether I'm falling behind or getting ahead in the time. A tremendous help!

Finally, on each page *choose what you would consider*

the least important material, and *mark it* so you can leave it out if you find yourself getting behind. This will ensure that it will be the picky stuff that gets left out, and not the BEST STUFF. When you get to your strongest point at the end of your message, you don't have to rush through it—you've got plenty of time to really punch it home for your listeners.

Give it a try!

But even if such a technique doesn't work for you, always remember and practice this widely underestimated key for giving a successful message, and *end on time*.