

Greetings from Tyler,

The eyes of the world are focused on the action Israel is taking inside Gaza, after absorbing a constant barrage of rocket attacks fired indiscriminately in the direction of Israeli towns within range. Predictably, Israel is accused of conducting “genocide” against civilians in Gaza, and the whole Middle East is up in arms.

Last week, Iran warned of dire consequences if Israel should introduce ground forces in Gaza, officially claiming it would be “the biggest mistake the Zionist regime ever made!” In terms of Iranian rhetoric, that’s saying a lot. But there will be little humor to be found in Iranian bluster if the world stands by while they acquire nuclear weapons. Israel called the bluff by moving ground forces in to try to find weapons caches and those responsible for the ongoing rocket attacks.

As reported last week, there have been riotous demonstrations throughout the capitals of the Middle East, including the most moderate of the Arab world. There have been demands for a cease-fire, but to what end? Terrorists aren’t big on complying with agreements they’ve made, and breaking promises by attacking Israelis is obviously a matter of pride with them. Examples in this current conflict are no exception. Israel stops its actions while convoys deliver food and medicine, but the rockets continue to be launched toward Israel’s southern cities.

The world’s greatest concern is that this conflict might spread to include other Middle East entities. There are reports that missiles have been fired into Israel from southern Lebanon (one came through the roof of a retirement home) and concerns that a second front might be re-ignited in the area of the skirmish that played out in the Summer of 2006, with Hezbollah.

But the Gaza conflict has spread. It’s spread to Europe. Numerous attacks have taken place around Europe against Jewish and Israeli targets. A synagogue in southwestern France was attacked and almost burned. Another synagogue in London was the target of attempted arson. There are reports of several other attacks against individuals all over Europe which are believed to be instigated by anger over the situation in Gaza. The Muslim presence in Europe promises to be a major factor as events play out in the Middle East.

Anti-Semitism is once again on the rise in Europe, and there are signs of it here in the United States as evidenced by the reported chatter from predominantly liberal quarters. The UN issues condemnations of Israel on a routine basis. Extreme hatred of the Jews and all things considered “Jewish” has been responsible for several of the darkest chapters of world history.

A cursory glance at the history of Christianity beginning around 325 AD clearly reveals a bias and revulsion toward Jewish customs and practices that remains to this day. Europe has not forgotten the role anti-Semitism played in the ultimate destruction during World War II, but the advent of large, unassimilated Muslim populations throughout Europe

today all but guarantees violent acts against Israelis and Jews living in Europe. Current reports show it is a reality.

Obviously, the war between Jew and Muslim will never end until one or the other is utterly defeated. If you believe that any of the end time Bible prophecies are accurate, all parties mentioned above, with the possible exceptions of the U.S. and the UN will be active participants in the end game.

The hatred of things “Jewish” has a pervasive, and nearly inexplicable history.

The Garner Ted Armstrong program produced 293 with one hundred twenty three first time contacts over the short holiday week, featuring Is Jesus God, and Only a Fool... This week offered the booklet on Unanswered Prayer and produced 484 requests with two hundred twenty six first time contacts.

On a personal note, our family is looking forward to a momentous event this weekend. My only son, Michael Armstrong is marrying the girl of all our dreams, Melody Rowland on Sunday. They have the wholehearted approval of everyone, and we couldn't be happier. No need for cards or gifts, I just thought I should share a little of the joy.

Have a great Sabbath,

Mark Armstrong

75th Anniversary!

There is a framed cover of the Plain Truth magazine standing on the credenza behind the desk in my Dad's former office, dated January 1959. It features two black and white photos, one of my Granddad, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, in the radio studio recording the World Tomorrow radio program with my Grandmother Loma sitting in. The other photo shows my Dad, Garner Ted Armstrong, in the same studio recording the program with my Mom, Shirley. The cover reads, “The WORLD TOMORROW'S 25TH Anniversary.”

That anniversary was celebrated exactly 50 years ago, making this January the 75th anniversary of my Grandfather's first weekly radio program, broadcasting from a standpoint that is still having quite an impact. As you'll see in the excerpt below, the very first time Mr. HWA appeared before a radio microphone was a couple months earlier. I thought you might enjoy his description of that event as we acknowledge the passage of its 75th Anniversary.

You may also find it interesting that he chose God's promises to Abraham as the subject matter for his very first message broadcast. This excerpt is straight out of his own Autobiography.

The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong - Volume 1, beginning on page 529

In September – very soon after rejecting a salary and being controlled and muzzled by MEN, the living Christ began opening doors for the MASS-proclaiming of His Gospel. It was then that someone brought to my attention the fact that the local radio station at Eugene, KORE, then the very smallest minimum-power of 100 watts, had a morning devotional program scheduled, but that they were having difficulty getting local ministers to conduct the program.

It was free time, carried by the station as a public service sustaining program of 15 minutes, 7:45 to 8:00 a.m.

Immediately I went to the radio station. A woman secretary told me she felt sure they would be glad to have me take the program for a week. I was to call back later for the exact date.

On my second call I was assigned the week of October 9th.

October 9th was surely a great big day in my life - the day of my very first experience before a microphone, ON THE AIR!

I took this opportunity very seriously. It was an opportunity to speak to several hundred people at once! I had never spoken to that many before.

I spent the preceding week preparing rather extensive notes and script. I might never again have such an opportunity, so I decided to strike directly at the very heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Since the Kingdom of God is based on the promises made to Abraham, I began, on Monday morning's program with the PROMISES made to Abraham.

Mike-Fright

I had heard a lot about everybody getting mike-fright the very first time on the air. I wondered if I would experience this. It was probably the most exciting adventure of my life.

On Monday morning, I arrived at the radio studio early. The announcer did not come into the studio until ten or fifteen seconds before 7:45.

Mike-fright? Why, I thought to myself, I'm calm and cool as a cucumber!

"Listen!" I said quietly but quickly to the announcer. "I've never been on the air before. If you have any instructions, you'd better give them to me in a hurry. We have only 10 seconds!"

He looked at me disdainfully, and a little bored.

“Just stand up there in front of the mike, and start talking as soon as I announce you,” he replied.

About three seconds later he announced me. While he was giving this very brief announcement, on the air, I thought, “Well I don’t have any mike-fright. I’m sure glad of that!”

Then, for the first time in my life, I said into the microphone:

“GREETINGS, friends!”

But suddenly something had happened! Before those two words were finished, something had hit me like a jolt! Something had started my heart pounding like a sledge-hammer! I felt myself gasping for breath! During those opening two words, MIKE-FRIGHT had seized me!

I struggled with all my might to control my hard breathing so it would not be audible for the air. It was agony, but I concentrated my mind with all the strength I had on two things – to carefully say the words of my typed script as naturally as I could, and to control my hard breathing so it did not sound.

After two or three minutes I was making good progress in gaining control. After some five minutes my breathing had returned to normal, and I was so absorbed in getting this vital message over to the largest audience of my life - even though that audience was invisible - that I forgot all about mike-fright.

The Surprising Response

The second morning there was no mike-fright. I was beginning to gain assurance, and able to speak a little more naturally.

It must have been about Thursday morning that the announcer told me the station owner, Mr. Frank Hill, wanted to see me in his office later in the morning.

He had received several letters and telephone calls from listeners, requesting copies of my talks. I had offered no literature of any kind. I had invited no mail response.

“This is rather surprising,” said Mr. Hill. “We never had any response of any kind, before, from this morning devotional program. They told me you had not invited any. Yet it has been coming. I listened in on you this morning to see what was causing it. You have an excellent radio voice, and a way of delivering your message that arouses interest and holds an audience.

“Now, Mr. Armstrong,” he continued, “I want to suggest that you work out a regular Sunday morning Church service, condensed into a half hour. I’d like to put that on as a regular sustaining program - free time - but I can’t do that without offering equal time to every church in town. However I will sell you the time at less than bare cost operation, \$2.50 per half hour.”

And THAT suggestion from Mr. Frank Hill is what put the idea of the WORLD TOMORROW program in my mind!

Altogether 14 letters and telephone calls came in to the radio station requesting copies of the messages I had broadcast.

I thanked him, and told him I would see what I could do.

But, \$2.50 every week! WOW! That was almost as much as my entire salary had been! And I had just previously renounced even that small salary!

Today, \$2.50 per half-hour broadcast seems incredibly small. We have to pay far more than that per minute on stations today! But it seemed like an insurmountable barrier then.

Yet I knew this was God’s WORK, not mine. I was only an instrument. God had promised to supply every need.