

Greetings from Tyler,

Hope you all had a terrific Pentecost. My Mom and I were at Land Between the Lakes with a terrific group numbering over eighty. Services were conducted on the Sabbath and the next day, Pentecost. Dr. Ricks organized all the meetings and events which included two morning sessions on Sunday, and quite a number of speakers were represented over the two days. Everything was upbeat and positive, and I'm sure all that attended returned home with a favorable report.

As last week's update was written on Thursday, we have two weeks' results to report for the Garner Ted Armstrong television program. Last week's program offered The Long Tradition of Prophetic Insight and Accuracy and The Gospel Message for the Next Millennium. It brought 402 requests with one hundred nineteen first time callers. This week's programs offered Emerging Beast Power, Iron & Clay, and Twenty-first Century WATCH, and another program was in circulation offering Galatians 1,2 and 3 and Saved by Grace. This week's response totaled 299 with eighty-five first time contacts.

You've seen the news of the deadly storms that have ripped through the mid-west. We just placed a call up to some of our friends and members who live in Sioux City, Iowa and it was reported that it "was as if they were in a bubble." In other words, the storms raged around but did not hit them directly. We don't personally know any of the families who lost loved ones in the Cedar Falls area where there were fatalities, but our prayers go out on their behalf.

President Bush has been making the rounds on the European continent in what has been billed as a "farewell tour," meeting with numerous heads of state, including the pope. Don't forget the "church" (in this instance) is a state, and that will take on additional significance as time goes on.

News reports have focused largely on calls for additional sanctions to be levied against Iran in another effort to get them to shut down aspects of their nuclear program with military potential. Iran, through its rabid spokesman president Ahmadinejad has denounced all such proposals, repeating insistently the coming destruction of Israel and declaring that President Bush does not have the capacity or the time to damage even a smidgen of Iran's "sacred soil." We'll see.

There are reports of an Egyptian sponsored truce between Israel and Gaza, but don't kid yourself. The Middle East is poised for war. All the treaties and truces of the past forty years have gone by the wayside and this will be no different. Israel's very existence represents the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and there are many more developments which must materialize in order to complete the end-time scenario which leads to Jesus' return and intervention on earth.

The energy debate may well become central to the coming U.S. Presidential election. With oil up over \$130 per barrel and food prices soaring it is a critical issue to each and every one of us. Thanks to the divine blessings inherent in our nation, the resources are

available to meet domestic needs well beyond the foreseeable future. The technology exists to develop those resources in ways that are not environmentally damaging, according to dozens of reports and studies.

Will our politicians and their boosters succeed in wrecking our way of life? It's beginning to look as if it's their top priority! Let's never forget, there is a higher power at work. This nation is in a time of testing, and it appears that the Church of God remains in a time of testing and trial that began at least a quarter century ago. How will we handle it? That's a question each one of us must answer individually.

Thanks to all of those who worked to make the Pentecost weekend a success, wherever that may have been!

Have a good Sabbath, and we'll be in touch,

Mark Armstrong